

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 February 2021

UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

Summary

Following approval of its work programme for 2019/2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting in April 2019 commissioned the Scrutiny Working Group to undertake the review – Gangs and Knife Crime.

The purpose of the Scrutiny Working Group was to investigate how Northampton Borough Council (NBC) can play an active role in tackling knife crime and gangs in Northampton.

An in-depth review commenced in June 2019 and concluded in September 2020.

Ten recommendations that were suggested by the panel were put forward to Cabinet and agreed at their meeting in January 2021.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the implementation of the recommendations that were agreed.

Recommendation Updates:

Collaborative working

1. **That the current work and programmes undertaken by the Community Safety Team regarding knife crime is continuous and becomes more strategic.**

The Community Safety Strategy was refreshed in July 2020. Violent Crime and Serious Organised Crime are strategic priorities for the partnership. The action plan that has been developed to deliver the plan has a clear focus on knife crime, gangs and youth violence.

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- 2. That the Community Safety Manager is charged with working with all relevant organisations and Agencies so that they collaborate and enhance joint bids for funding in respect of dealing with gangs and knife crime.**

Year 4, 2021-2022 funding for the Trusted Relationships programme, being delivered by Free2Talk has been granted by the Home Office. This will mean a further £220,000 to work in targeted wards within the Borough with young people who are on the periphery of getting involved with gangs.

Big Lottery bid for youth provision is currently being explored with a number of partners – reached stage 2 of the application process.

- 3. That Northampton Borough Council, works with other Agencies and Groups in the town to coordinate the youth provision/offer in the Borough.**

A Youth Provider Network has been established. More than 25 organisations that are delivering youth services/provision in the Town are on the circulation list. Terms of Reference have been established, to include the coordination of activity and to identify any gaps in service provision. The group meets every 6 weeks and have set up a WhatsApp group to keep in regular contact with each other as the youth offer in the Town continues to develop.

- 4. That Northampton Borough Council leads on Multi Agency Training, regarding issues relating to gangs and knife crime, to bring all multi Agency work together.**

Through the Trusted Relationships project, the lack of training and understanding of youth work has become apparent. The Youth Providers Network and the Community of Practice partnership meetings provide an opportunity to identify the gaps and need for partnership learning, development and training.

The following training has been delivered and is planned to be delivered through the project and has been and will be available for officers across the partnership.

Youth Providers event 29th June 2019 – workshop on ‘Keeping young people safe’ based on contextual safeguarding.

Youth Providers event 25th November 2019 – Young People Online.

Signs of safety training: 16th July 2020

Introduction to Systemic Supervision: Using Reflective Models to Supervise Youth & Community Workers: Friday 26th February 10am-12pm Led by Ricky Murphy Senior Lecturer and Psychotherapist

Proactive responses to tackling youth violence – Friday 5th March 1-3pm Led by Craig Pinkney, Researcher, Lecturer and Activist <https://craigpinkney.com/>

- 5. That a meeting with Community Safety Team, NBC, and Community Courtyard is convened regarding involving its work.**

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Meeting took place and Community Courtyard attending the Youth Providers Network and added to the WhatsApp group. Partnerships are developing amongst the youth providers in the Borough. Community Courtyard have also been supporting the Community Resilience Hub work, in providing support to those most vulnerable in our communities.

Facilities for Young People

- 6. That all potential funding streams are investigated so that youth clubs, and other facilities for young people are brought back into the town.**

Community Safety budget has been utilised to support additional youth provision in the Borough. As well as external funding pots. Including the recently established 'safe zone' in McDonalds in the Town Centre, part of our focus on contextual safeguarding, which looks at the influences on safety outside the home.

There has also been some specific engagement work, in Thorplands (due to being identified as a police priority area and recognising the need for a multi-agency approach to build community resilience). Including hand delivered letters to residents, engagement sessions and bike marking session, designed to improve confidence and increase reporting. Funding secured for joint basketball/youth worker project after recognizing through community engagement that there was a gap in youth provision.

- 7. Funding is the core as all activities cost money and it is ensured that the costs should not be passed onto the young people.**

There are activities that are available for young people to access at no cost. The Youth forum have started planning the 'youth app' in partnership with the communication and digital teams at Northampton Borough Council, the app will allow young people to see what youth provision there is in the Town, searchable by location.

- 8. That in recognising that the most difficult area appears to be liaising with families, when safe to do so, the Community Safety Team has a stand a family fun day; or a similar event is organised remotely.**

There will hopefully be several opportunities to engage with families, once the COVID restrictions are lifted. The Community Safety & Engagement Team will deliver their annual calendar of events, days and weeks of action in our priority neighbourhoods as soon as it is safe to do so and when the COVID regulations and restrictions allow.

Best Practice

- 9. That the Community Safety Team liaises with Officers at Merseyside regarding their best practice initiatives in dealing gangs and knife crime and aim to mirror such initiatives in Northampton.**

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Community Safety Manager has been in touch with the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership. Awaiting a response.

10. That all Councillors are provided with the link to the short film produced by young people, via Free2 Talk - Knives end Lives: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCnUZyfeL4> and encouraged to watch it.

Video circulated to all elected members – including a brief on the work that Free2Talk have delivered over the past 3 years and how members can get in touch, should they be aware of any young people that may be on the periphery of getting involved with gangs.

In addition to the recommendations, I have provided some further updates of planned activity and activity that has taken place in relation to gangs and knife crime within the last 12 months:

- Through the funding secured from the Home Office's Trusted Relationships Fund, Free2Talk continue to deliver youth services in four of our priority neighbourhood areas, increasing the support available to the town's most vulnerable young people. Delivering interventions and mentoring to young people most at risk of getting involved in knife crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Development work of the augmented reality app for the Knife Angel started including filming interviews with key people involved in tackling violence and gang related issues.
- Promoted and supported Police knife amnesty events in Town Centre in December.
- Developing a virtual community safety package for schools, with partners, which includes raising the awareness of gangs and knife crime – to be rolled out in our primary schools.
- Continue to plan with partners a range of activity, focusing on anti-violence messages and activity to coincide with the arrival of the knife angel which has been put back to the Autumn 2021.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Team continue to support with tackling offenders, securing Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions and Cuckooing Injunctions against identified perpetrators.

Brief Author: Vicki Rockall, Community Safety & Engagement Manager on behalf of Councillor Anna King, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety & Engagement

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