

CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE: REDUCING THE RISK OF YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGING IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Cabinet Member	Councillor David Simmonds
Cabinet Portfolio	Education & Children's Services
Officer Contact	Jon Pitt, Democratic Services, Administration Directorate
Papers with report	Reducing the Risk of Young People Engaging in Criminal Activity and Anti-Social Behaviour.

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To consider the Children, Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee's review into Reducing the Risk of Young People Engaging in Criminal Activity and Anti-Social Behaviour and the recommendations contained therein.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	Putting our Residents First: <i>Our People</i> To put our residents first by helping to reduce the risk of young people in the Borough engaging in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.
Financial Cost	The recommendations set out in this report do not have any direct financial implications.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Children's, Young People & Learning
Ward(s) affected	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 1. Welcomes the report from the Children, Young People & Learning Policy Overview Committee (as in Appendix 1) on the review into reducing the risk of young people engaging in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.**
- 2. Endorses the recommendations of the Policy Overview Committee as set out overleaf.**

Policy Overview Committee Recommendations

Improving support

- 1) To help young people at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, that the Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services requests that officers investigate the feasibility of improving access to appropriate preventative services available for young people and their parents, via the Early Intervention Service, where the young person is at risk of becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.**
- 2) That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services requests that the Early Intervention Service investigates the possibility of kick-starting a Parenting Forum / Network and/or regular seminars for parents of young offenders or young people at risk of becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.**

Improving awareness and communication

- 3) That the Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services requests that officers work with the Early Intervention Service to investigate the provision of activities for young people within Hillingdon and the scope for additional provision. In addition, officers are asked to ensure that the Youth Offending Service has the necessary information to promote suitable activities to young offenders and their parents through the Youth Offending Service and other relevant agencies.**
- 4) That the Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services requests that officers explore the feasibility of working with the Borough's schools to develop and strengthen interventions designed to divert young people from criminal and anti-social behaviour. Officers are also requested to explore the provision of drug and crime awareness education available to young people to ascertain whether it is sufficient and meets the needs of particular communities and age groups.**
- 5) That the Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services requests that officers investigate the possibility of improving joint work and timely information sharing between partner organisations, with particular regard to young offenders.**

Reasons for recommendations

The Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee previously agreed to a review topic that considered how to reduce serious youth violence and the emerging risk of gangs in Hillingdon. It was noted during discussions about the topic that there was a risk that such a review could duplicate work being undertaken as part of the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Peer Review programme. To minimise the risk of duplication, it was agreed that the review would be altered to cover similar but distinct issues that would complement rather than replicate the peer review.

The issue of young people engaging in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour was subsequently identified for the Committee to consider. It was agreed that the factors contributing towards young people becoming involved in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour would be explored and recommendations developed that would help to prevent young people from

becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. The recommendations would also seek to further assist those that have offended previously.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject or amend some or all of the Committee's recommendations.

Supporting Information

1. Information on the agreed terms of reference for this review and a list of the witnesses who provided evidence can be found in Appendices A and B of the report itself. In addition to formal witness sessions held at Committee meetings, the review was also steered by informal witness sessions. These were held with young people who had previously been through the youth justice system and with parents. The parents had children who were currently going through the youth justice system or had done so in the recent past.
2. In view of the information provided, the Committee highlighted two main themes, within which improvements could be made. These two areas are set out below.
3. **Improving Support** – The review identified a wish for the amount of preventative work to be increased, in order to steer young people away from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour in the first place. This included the support available to young people who could be at risk of becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour and also the need to improve awareness of the possible implications of becoming involved in such activity. The latter is covered further within the 'Improving Awareness and Communication' theme.

A number of support services are currently provided by the Council and its partners. Information in relation to these services was considered by the Committee during the review. The Committee recognised that there are already a wide range of services in place that were dedicated to the support and rehabilitation of young offenders and that a significant amount of preventative work was being undertaken. However, although the Early Intervention Service at the Council undertakes a range of preventative work, access to the Youth Offending Service is currently only available to young people and their parents after they have entered the justice system.

Consequently, this section of the report explores how preventative services could be provided for young people at risk of becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. It also considers the possibility of providing support to the parents of these young people.

4. **Improving Awareness and Communication** – During the review, the Committee received information about the existing services available to young people pre and post offence and about the range of activities that are available to young people locally. These included activities to help prevent young people from drifting towards crime and anti-social behaviour as well as information about more general recreational activities.

The evidence received suggested that consideration of whether additional activities can be accommodated is merited. It is also clear that promotion of these activities is worthy of further consideration. Drug and crime awareness information and the advice provided to young people on the potential consequences of becoming involved in drugs or criminal activity have also been identified as being areas where improvements could be considered. The Council undertakes a range of communication to promote activities available to young people and adults alike, but the evidence considered during the review suggests that some

groups, especially parents of young offenders, are not always aware of the activities available.

Young people already receive drugs and crime awareness information via schools, but it was suggested to the Committee that the time dedicated to this issue and the range of information provided could be increased.

At the scoping stage of this review, it was agreed that the exploration of opportunities for enhancing partnership working was likely to be an important issue for consideration. The evidence received during the review suggested that this was indeed the case, although there was evidence that there was already much successful joint working in relation to youth crime and anti-social behaviour within Hillingdon.

This section of the report looks at the scope for investigating opportunities to establish additional activities for young people within Hillingdon and suggests that the promotion of existing activities is investigated further. It also considers the opportunities for improving drugs and crime awareness available to young people and the possibility of improving joint working and information sharing.

5. Some of the information and suggestions received by the Committee during the course of the review related to issues that the Council has either no direct or minimal control over. The Committee felt that it was important to include this information in the final report. Where appropriate, it has been included in relation to the recommendation to which it most closely corresponds. It is envisaged that the review will be shared with relevant partner organisations for them to determine whether these observations merit further investigation.
6. The broad scope of this review led to a range of recommendations with implications for a number of service areas. In considering their implementation, the following comments are provided by officers for Cabinet to consider:
 - a. **Recommendation 1:** Offending or anti-social behaviour is often associated with other unmet needs that a child or young person may have. The recent development of the Early Help Assessment and Team around the Family process should facilitate the early identification of associated risk factors by universal and targeted services and the provision of multi-agency plans designed to address these. The Family Key Working Service will also be able to support those children, young people and families with more complex needs and who are therefore at greater risk.

As part of its work the Youth Offending Service will identify siblings of young people subject to statutory interventions and support their access to universal and Tier 2 services.
 - b. **Recommendation 2:** The Family Centre Network groups will be explored as the means by which local parenting forums can be developed for parents whose children are displaying risky behaviours, including offending and anti-social behaviour. The Youth Offending Service will share the tools and materials it has developed in working with the parents of young offenders with any such groups that develop.
 - c. **Recommendations 3:** Early Intervention Services already has a good idea of the youth provision out there, so the focus would be more around making that information more readily accessible to children, young people and families. This will involve ensuring that the Families Information Directory and the Young People's Directory is kept up to date and advertised to the community. Early Intervention Services will work

with other services, such as Sports and Leisure Services, to identify how best to target the young people that Early Intervention Services works with directly.

- d. **Recommendation 4:** A range of services are already delivered that are targeted at specific groups of young people. The Early Intervention Service for Children and Young People (EISCYP) works closely with schools to deliver presentations and structured workshops. 'SORTED', the substance misuse treatment service delivers group work sessions in schools on a termly basis, working with young people in each school year. These workshops are specifically designed to respond to targeted young people's needs. The workshops focus on drugs and alcohol misuse and provide young people with detailed informed about the dangers of drug use as well as ensuring young people know where to go for support. 'SORTED' also offers one to one counselling support for young people who are misusing drugs.

A range of other targeted programmes including 'Unique Swagga', (a girls and young women's project) which is mentioned in the main report, work with specific groups or provide support in a specific area. This includes 'KISS' that focuses on relationships and sexual health and 'I-Choose', a programme for vulnerable boys and young men. Other programmes on offer include a peer education music programme known as 'Beats Per Minute', 'SWITCH' which supports young people who may be struggling with the transition from primary to secondary school, Young Leaders and Step up into youth work. All these programmes are structured to respond to the needs of young people who are deemed to be at risk of involvement in anti social behaviour. A range of agencies, including schools can refer young people to these programmes.

There is an ongoing evaluation of these programmes which should help to ensure that they meet the needs of particular communities and age groups. This work also links to the development of the Family Centred Network and the key working service.

More general work has been undertaken within schools, as acknowledged by the review. However, as highlighted by both young people and parents, there needs to be more on offer at a universal level regarding substance misuse (drug and alcohol) awareness and crime prevention.

Consideration could be given, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, to pulling together relevant stakeholders who currently have a role to play in this area (ie. police, schools, school nurses, youth workers and substance misuse providers) to investigate the potential for creating a universal awareness raising and prevention offer regarding substance misuse (drug and alcohol).

- e. **Recommendation 5:** As noted under recommendation 1, the development of the Team around the Family concept should promote joint working and integrated multi-agency planning for those families with children at risk of offending and anti-social behaviour. The Youth Offending Service Management Board, whose members include senior officers from the partner agencies, will include this as part of its key objectives.

Financial Implications

The recommendations set out in this report do not have any direct financial implications. Any additional work undertaken after agreement by the Cabinet would be met from within the existing resources available.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendations?

The number of young people becoming involved in criminal activity is falling, but the needs of young people that become involved in crime and anti-social behaviour can be high and complex in their nature. These young people and their families are often among the hardest to reach members of the local community. The recommendations set out in this review will not resolve all the issues associated with youth crime and anti-social behaviour, but it is anticipated that they could help to contribute towards further reductions in crime levels and also to play a role in steering young people away from entering the justice system.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Committee heard evidence from a wide range of witnesses, further details of which can be found at Appendix B of the report itself. In order to provide the Committee with the widest range of evidence possible, some informal sessions were arranged. These were held with young people and parents who had experience of the youth justice system. The sessions were in addition to the three formal witness sessions held at Committee meetings.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report noting that there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation to endorse the Policy Overview Committee's findings. As noted above, any costs associated with subsequent implementation of proposals as approved by the Cabinet Member are expected to be managed within existing resources.

Legal

There are no legal implications arising out of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL