

Cabinet decision	 TOWER HAMLETS
24 April 2019	
Report of: Debbie Jones, Corporate Director Children and Culture	Classification: Unrestricted
Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Scrutiny Review Action Plan	

Lead Member	Councillor Danny Hassell, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	7 March 2019
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled

Executive Summary

This report submits the report and action plan in response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Session on Gangs and Serious Youth Violence.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note this report and the progress made since the Scrutiny Review report was published in March 2018, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Approve the action plan which sets out the Council's response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Session in Appendix 2 to the report.
3. Support the continuation of efforts made through newly implemented initiatives to disrupt gang activity, with particular attention on the improved quality and timeliness of services for children at risk of becoming involved in gang activity and serious youth violence.
4. Acknowledge the recognition of Ofsted in monitoring visit reports as to the improvements made in Children's Social Care

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations from the scrutiny review sessions on gangs and serious youth violence (Appendix 1) which was approved at OSC in March 2018. The Council's responses to these recommendations are outlined in the action plan in Appendix 2 and both documents are now due for consideration by Cabinet.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet may decline to agree the action plan. This is not recommended as the report outlines work undertaken by Councillors and officers to identify areas of improvement and the Council's response which identifies actions it is taking and will take to implement these recommendations.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Scrutiny Review was chaired by Councillor Danny Hassell in his role as Scrutiny Lead for Children's Services in order to obtain an overview of the scale and impact of Gangs and Serious Youth Violence in the Borough and the work currently being planned and delivered by the Council and its partners.
- 3.2 The review was held over two sessions in January and February 2018. It followed the 2017 Ofsted review of Tower Hamlets' Children's Services, as one of the recommendations that arose was that the Council should *"Urgently improve the quality and timeliness of services for children who are at risk of becoming involved in gangs and serious youth violence. Ensure the alignment of those services with those for children who go missing and those who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Ensure that comprehensive and accurate intelligence and data inform service developments."*
- 3.3 The review was underpinned by three core questions:
- 1) What is the true scale and impact of Gangs and Youth Violence issue in Tower Hamlets?
 - 2) What are common factors that lead to involvement in Gangs?
 - 3) How can the Council and its partners work together more effectively to reduce the impact of gangs in the borough and help young people avoid or exit gang involvement?
- 3.4 The two sessions were attended by the following people:

Cllr Dave Chesterton Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Clare Harrisson Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member
Cllr Rabina Khan Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member
Cllr Shafi Ahmed Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member (Substitute)

David Burbidge Co-opted member of the Health Scrutiny Committee
Fahimal Islam Young Mayor
Shaam Islam Deputy Young Mayor
Cllr Amy Whitelock-Gibbs Lead Member for Education and Children's Services
Claire Belgard Interim Head of Integrated Youth and Community Services
Nikki Bradley Service Manager Youth Justice, Children's Social care and Family Interventions
Debbie Jones Corporate Director, Children's Services
Nancy Meehan Interim Divisional Director, Children's Social Care
Adam Salmon Ending Gang, Group and Serious Youth Violence Coordinator
Paula Wilkinson Crime Reduction & Rapid Response Team Manager
Mike Hamer Deputy Chief Inspector
Sean Drislane Detective Inspector
Maurice Mason Community Safety and Partnership Manager, London Borough of Hackney
John O'Shea Bow School
Daniel Rose Director of Spotlight
Khalid Sugulle St Giles Trust
Joe Williams Spotlight, Poplar HARCA

- 3.5 The report makes a series of twenty recommendations which can be categorised into the following four areas:

Approach and Focus: recommendations 1-5

Analysis, Knowledge and Understanding: recommendations 6-8

Communications, Joint-Working and Engagement: recommendations 9-14

Training and Capacity Building: recommendations 15-20

- 3.6 A comprehensive action plan has been developed responding to the recommendations set out in the scrutiny review report in Appendix 1. Many of these actions are underway or completed. The improvements made have been noted by Ofsted when conducting monitoring visits of children's social care.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Different communities and cohorts of the population experience anti-social behaviour and associated crime differently. Those most vulnerable to becoming both perpetrators and victims of ASB and crime include:
- Young people
 - Parents/guardians of children
 - Residents from the BAME community
 - Residents with a disability
- 4.2 Although it was identified during the review that a majority of young people currently involved in gangs are from BAME communities, this is broadly representative of the diversity of the local population. Similarly, although gang involvement is predominantly male dominated, the impact on women and girls through direct involvement or families is an area of specific focus. Community cohesion and empowerment was at the heart of the review and the focus for recommendations.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
- 5.2 There are no other statutory implications.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There is no request for new funding to implement the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Session on Gangs and Serious Youth Violence. The recommendations are being implemented with existing resources in several council departments.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive, as appropriate, in connection with the discharge of any functions. It is consistent with the Constitution and the statutory framework to prepare an action plan to address the issues identified and make further recommendations for improvement.
- 7.2. The Council's functions in relation to children include a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 10 of the Act also requires the Council to make arrangements to promote cooperation with its safeguarding partner agencies including schools, the police, probation services and the youth offending team.
- 7.3. The action plan and initiatives to disrupt gang activity are consistent with this legislative framework and Government guidance; in particular the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), and the Government's Serious Violence Strategy published in 2018.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Scrutiny Review Report
- Appendix 2 – Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Scrutiny Review Action Plan
- Appendix 3 – Ofsted Monitoring Letter 25th May 2018

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A