



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
12 January 2010

Report of the Corporate Director for Children
and Young People

ITEM 7

Response to the Children and Young People's Commission's Review into Gang Culture in Derby

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Between April and November 2009, the Children and Young People's Commission undertook a review into gang culture in Derby and the actions taken to combat it, submitting a report to Council Cabinet on 24 November.
- 1.2 The partners in the Community Safety Partnership have been focusing on gang-related activity in the city for some time but the issue became critical in late 2008, following the shooting of a local young man.
- 1.3 Based on learning from other parts of the country, a multi-agency gangs team was established, along with a strategy to address different levels of activity, and those actions have met with some success. In the face of a very challenging budget situation for all public services, the actions of the partners need to be continually kept under review, re-prioritised and targeted to best effect.
- 1.4 The proposed responses to the eight recommendations of the Commission are set out below.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the responses to the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Commission.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At its meeting on 24 November 2009, Council Cabinet considered a report on Gangs in Derby. The report detailed the format and the outcomes of the review carried out in 2009 by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Commission into gang culture in Derby.
- 3.2 Council Cabinet resolved to request officers in consultation with the Community Safety Partnership to produce for a future meeting a detailed response which describes current activity.

- 3.3 The objectives of the Commission's review were to
- Find out from young people how they viewed the current situation in Derby, how gangs affected them and about what they thought the Council and the Police should be doing.
 - Ask the Police and the Derby Community Safety Partnership (DCSP) for their assessment of the present situation, about what they were doing/intending to do, and about what had been achieved.
 - Identify any areas of concern for both the young people and the agencies that were tasked with responding to gangs issues in Derby.
 - Make recommendations to Council Cabinet based on the evidence considered by the Commission.
- 3.4 Whilst the Community Safety Partnership (CSP – involving the Council, Police, NHS Derby City and the CSP services) had been focusing work on developing gang-related activity in Derby for some time, the issue became critical in late 2008, following the shooting of a local young man. Police and CSP intelligence indicate that although there are over 20 'gangs' in Derby, the most challenging issues relate to two and it is tensions between these two gangs that causes most concern.
- 3.5 Scoping of learning from other parts of the country indicates that a specialised response to gang culture is best practice. The CSP therefore set up a multi-agency gangs team (MAGT), which is tasked with delivering the core elements of the Derby strategy:
- Working with individuals at risk of becoming involved in gang activity
 - Working with gang leaders
 - Building the resilience of communities to gang activity.
- 3.6 The review report from the Children and Young People's Commission adds to the background information on gangs-related activity, especially from the perspective of young people in the city. The scoping of further work through the multi-agency gangs team (MAGT) needs to take account of this information, as well as the challenging budget situation that all public services are now facing and which will become increasingly difficult in future. The prioritising and targeting of activities in the light of the level of dangers faced and the refocusing of existing resources will underpin this.
- 3.7 The responses to the Commission's recommendations are set out below in this context.

Recommendation 1

- 3.8 The Commission was concerned to be told by the Director of the Community Safety Partnership that work to address community safety in Derby did not appear to be seen as a budget pressure by the Council.
- 3.9 Whilst now being aware of the level of funding that the CSP has received from the Council in 2009/10 and will receive in 2010/11, the Commission considers that the funding requirements needed by the CSP to address the 'gangs issue' should be further explored and recommends that Council Cabinet should ask for detailed information from the Derby Community Safety Partnership, the Police and their partners on:

- a) Their current anti-gang activities and their work plan for the coming budgetary period
 - b) The cost of continuing to deliver the current anti-gang activities and the estimated cost of completing the work plan
 - c) The size of any funding gap that will exist between the income that has been identified and the cost of the planned anti-gangs activities.
 - d) The likely implications of not continuing the current anti-gang activities and/or of not completing the work plan
 - e) The likely impact on Derby and its residents/economy of not continuing the current anti-gang activities and of not completing the work plan.
- 3.10 The Commission further recommends that if any reduction in the Council's support for such activities is contemplated it should not be made without a full appreciation of the likely effects of the reduction on the capacity of the DCSP, the Police, Council departments and their partner organisations to effectively respond to the situation in Derby.

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.11 This report illustrates the breadth and depth of the work that has so far been done by the Community Safety Partnership, the Police, and their partners to address the gangs issues in Derby. This work has so far been very successful but the Commission considers that there is a significant risk that those gains which have been made will be reduced or lost if there is insufficient funding provided to continue and expand upon the work.

Response

- 3.12 *In the Council and partner agencies the budget process for 2010-11 and beyond is still in hand. All are balancing a range of demands and priorities in the context of significant budget challenges. There is no specific pressure included in relation to addressing concerns around gangs, but excellent work is being provided and will continue. The implications of not continuing the positive work that has been put in place through the MAGT is acknowledged and the budget process also involves prioritisation and targeting of existing resources. Final decisions can only be made at the end of that process. Refocusing could mean the re-allocation of existing resources or finding new resources within Children and Young People's Services.*
- 3.13 *The current delivery plan of the MAGT focuses on*
- *referrals made for young people at risk of involvement in gang membership*
 - *delivery of the schools programme*
 - *the provision of a mediator in the city to reduce future conflict and*
 - *work with communities to build their resilience to gang activity.*
- 3.14 *A review of the MAGT by the CSP is underway to ensure best use of limited resources. The focus of the MAGT will be on working with high risk offenders, families and communities, and ensuring that mainstream services such as schools, youth service and probation services, have the knowledge and skills to deliver the preventative and early intervention work.*

- 3.15 *The MAGT will also continue to lead and coordinate the strategic and operational activity in regard to gangs across the city in order to avoid:*
- *An escalation in conflict between rival gangs resulting in further violence, potentially fatal.*
 - *Increased numbers of young people becoming involved in gang activity and criminality*
 - *A decrease in public confidence as communities are seriously affected by gang activity*
 - *Serious negative impact on the city of Derby and its reputation as a safe city, in the knowledge this will impact on the local economy, as experienced in other large cities following gang related shootings.*
- 3.16 *With regard to the Council's Youth Service resources, the balance will be struck between redirection to focus on gang-related activity and the maintenance of local community provision which contributes to young people's active participation in positive activities. The availability of enough 'things to do, places to go' is a key factor in our strategy to maximise use of Youth Opportunities Fund and Positive Activities. The increase in the variety of positive activities will continue to be funded until March 2011.*

Recommendation 2

- 3.17 The Commission was informed of the take-up so far of the Schools Programme run by the Multi Agency Gangs Team and recommends to Cabinet that wherever possible this is supported and facilitated by the City Council.

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.18 The Commission considers that there would be benefit in ensuring that the Schools Programme reaches as many young people as possible. If practicable and funds allow, the Programme should be extended to younger children in nursery and primary schools.

Response

- 3.19 *The work in schools has gone well. A series of lessons on group offending/gangs has been produced for use in secondary schools, although they could be used more widely in other settings such as the informal settings of the Youth Service to complement what is happening in schools. The lessons follow on from the primary lesson that MAGT has produced and used in a number of primary schools. The lessons are intended as a preventative tool to be used in schools and should form part of a much wider range of strategies being employed by a range of agencies to address gang activity. There has also been a whole day event for schools on gangs and the Prevent Strategy which was successful in promoting participation.*
- 3.20 *These avenues of support will continue in the future though the delivery of the schools programme currently requires two members of the MAGT. Consideration will be given to this work being co-delivered with schools and the CYP Department, in conjunction with one member of the MAGT. If this proves to be possible, it would free up resources within the MAGT, but would demand refocusing or additional resources elsewhere.*

Recommendation 3

- 3.21 The Commission recognises the need to provide parenting support to some families and recommends to Council Cabinet that current initiatives to do this are supported and where practicable enhanced.

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.22 To provide the parenting support and the positive role models that have been identified as necessary by witnesses to the review.

Response

- 3.23 *There is a good range of individual and group based parenting support programmes in existence in Derby for families requiring additional support. This is underpinned by Derby City for Children and Young People's Executive's Parenting Strategy, addressing strong parenting at various levels. The level of service delivery is currently provided through the Community Safety Partnership, Children and Young People's Services and the voluntary sector to ensure access for families requiring support is facilitated at all stages of need; universal, targeted or specialist.*
- 3.24 *Two significant developments that have increased Derby's offer to parents are the Family Intervention Project, which provides intensive support to 39 families, and the emerging Think Family initiative which has created additional opportunities for enhancing access to parenting support at lower levels of need. This will continue to increase and develop over 2010/11.*
- 3.25 *A good example of work on potentially refocusing actions is the project that has just been agreed by the City for Children and Young People's Executive (Derby's Children's Trust), to identify all of the resources currently devoted to work in supporting the most challenging family needs and determine how these can be used jointly in the most effective and efficient ways. This could positively impact on the aims of this recommendation.*

Recommendation 4

- 3.26 It is recommended that Council Cabinet asks all the Council's Neighbourhood Boards and Forums to:
1. Liaise with the DCSP's Multi Agency Gangs Team on the gangs issue in Derby and for all Boards and Forums to consider what actions they can take either to:
 - i) discourage young people from becoming involved in gangs, or;
 - ii) address any existing gang problems in their neighbourhoods
 2. To develop policies that will encourage young people to engage with the Council at a neighbourhood level.

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.27 The Commission is of the view that as gang membership is a territorial issue there would be considerable benefit if the gangs issue and the actions being taken to address it were brought to the attention of the Council's Neighbourhood Boards and Forums. It is also considered important for Boards and Forums in which there is currently no gang problem to be aware of what is happening elsewhere in the City and to take actions to prevent such problems occurring in their neighbourhoods.

Response

- 3.28 *The MAGT is beginning to build effective partnerships with Neighbourhood Boards, with a focus on working with those Boards in high risk neighbourhoods and building neighbourhood solutions and activities to build the resilience of the local communities.*
- 3.29 *As part of the ongoing young people's participation activities, which has consistently been graded as outstanding, work is already being carried out to encourage young people's involvement with Neighbourhood Boards, including training of and work with Ward Councillors and neighbourhood managers in supporting this development. Youth workers have supported young people to attend board and forum meetings when this is appropriate and work closely with boards in raising issues related to young people's needs. Many of the boards have allocated funding for new activities for young people, which are managed by the Youth Service. We also have a strong commitment to running city-wide activities which contribute to the breaking down of barriers between different groups of young people.*
- 3.30 *Ways of increasing Councillor's involvement at a local level with young people will also be considered – it is worth noting that young people involved in the training had no idea about such work and the idea of a 'surgery' was seen as a medical term.*

Recommendation 5

- 3.31 That the City Council should support, publicise and part sponsor an event, similar to the Liberation Day event, which would be open to all Derby young people and at which they would be able to:
- Meet with elected members and find out about Derby's political parties
 - Find out how to register to vote
 - Get advice on employment, training and education
 - Find out about activities for young people and discuss activities they would like to be provided in Derby
 - Meet with Derby employers to find out about employment opportunities and employers requirements
 - Be entertained – there would need to be a programme of entertainment throughout the event. This should be provided by Derby young people
 - Meet friends and other young people from across the City.

- 3.32 It is envisaged that although the event would be supported by the Council it would be organised by young people drawn from groups such as School Councils, Youth Clubs and other Youth Organisations with which the Council already has links. Derby University, Derby College and local business could be asked to sponsor the event. There will be a significant cost in providing the event but when considering this it should be remembered that it costs around £50,000 to keep one young person in prison for one year.
- 3.33 It is suggested that the event could be combined with a Jobs Fair, that the local political parties, the university, college, local businesses, clubs, charities and other organisations could have stands and staff able to give information to the young people. It is also envisaged that the event would be supported by all the Council's elected members.
- 3.34 The event could usefully include a scheduled debate with Council Cabinet members and one aim might be to develop a charter of understanding between the Council and young people in Derby in the 14-21 age range. It is suggested that this is something in which Voices in Action might wish to become involved.

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.35
1. To demonstrate Derby's recognition of the importance of the City's young people
 2. To address issues that have been expressed to the Commission by young people who have given evidence to the review
 3. For elected members to meet with young people and to hear their views on the issues which affect them
 4. To provide an opportunity for young people to input into a strategy aimed at helping and supporting them
 5. To provide advice guidance and information to young people on career and life choices
 6. To hold a high value, worthwhile and enjoyable event that will serve to counter the adverse publicity and opinions associated with recent events in the City involving young people.

Response

- 3.36 *Some of these proposals have real merit, but must be seen in the context of the excellent work already undertaken with and through Voices in Action. Advice on employment, training and education is extensive, particularly through the Connexions Service and we have annually shown strong performance in the NEET figures. There is also an annual Jobs and Skills event on a large scale. These can always be supplemented and the other elements of the proposal can be explored further, ensuring there is no duplication of existing initiatives.*
- 3.37 *A citywide event would mean that we are expecting young people to come to us rather than use existing resources such as local area summer fetes and other events as an opportunity to raise awareness about what a Councillor does and how young people can get involved in decision making within their local area.*

- 3.38 *Another proposal has been for the establishment of a youth assembly, enabling more young people to be embedded in the Council's decision making processes on an ongoing basis with the potential for real capacity building and empowerment that this would bring. This could be an alternative to a one off event. However, both require significant additional funding which would have to be considered in future budget rounds against other priorities.*
- 3.39 *Voices in Action is an excellent model of participation but it needs also to be everyone's job to consider young people's views and other examples of participation groups exist, with whom decision maker can engage.*

Recommendation 6

- 3.40 That the City Council should take steps to offer structured, graded and assessed work experience for Derby young people with the Council in all departments. If practicable this could include apprenticeships for Derby young people.

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.41 As one of the largest employers in Derby and Derbyshire the Council is in a unique position to offer work experience and the internships referred to by John Pitts. By doing so the Council could provide young people with an opportunity to experience working in a large and diverse organisation, and this will be of benefit to their CV's. The Council will benefit from a fresh look at its processes and should the young people subsequently apply for positions within the Council, it will have some idea of their capabilities and they will have knowledge of what it is that the Council does.

Response

- 3.42 *Two workers in the Youth Service lead on co-ordinating the Council's Business Administration Apprenticeship Scheme and Year 10/11 student work experience placements. At present there are 60 BA apprentices. 130 young people participated in work experience last year and so far this year the number has been 95. These opportunities are across the Council in paid posts working towards NVQ level 2. Recent targeted work linked to the recruitment of Pakistani young people to both schemes has proved successful. However, in the light of the current push on increasing apprenticeships in the public sector, it is timely to pursue this recommendation further.*
- 3.43 *The Youth Service's Pakistani Youth Development Project has also proved successful for engaging potentially alienated young people and the possibility of extending this to other communities can also be examined, subject to earlier points about refocusing resources.*

Recommendation 7

- 3.44 That the City Council should seek to involve Derby young people more fully in the Council's decision making processes

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.45 Since January 2009 the Children and Young People Commission has been in the practice of inviting young people's representatives to its Commission meetings. This has added an additional dimension to the scrutiny process. The young people have provided some valuable inputs to the Commission's deliberations and have at times surprised members with their grasp of what was being discussed. It would be a relatively easy task to extend this approach to other scrutiny meetings and there would seem to be no reason why the views of the young people might not be sought by Cabinet when they come to consider matters of importance to Derby's young people.

Response

- 3.46 *See response to Recommendation 5. Participation in decision-making has increased year on year since the establishment of the Children's Trust arrangements and this will continue, subject to the constraints on young people's time. The experience of the Children and Young People's Commission and the opportunity to involve young people in wider Scrutiny business could be promoted more widely by the CYP Commission Chair and members.*
- 3.47 *In addition, we have successfully delivered the Youth Opportunities Fund for the last four years where young people are applying for funding and young people on our Youth Panel decide on all the applications. Participation is also well established in the work of partners, for example Enthusiasm working with the Youth Service and Neighbourhood teams and other voluntary organisations in Allenton, Austin/Sunnyhill and Sinfen to engage positively with young people, commissioned through the Police.*

Recommendation 8

- 3.48 That the City Council should take further action to provide the harder to reach young people with easy access to information about voting and representing their communities.

Reasons for recommendation

- 3.49 Some young people told the Commission that they did not know what the Council did, or how, or why, they should vote. The work that is already being done to encourage young people to participate in the democratic processes is recognised by the Commission. However if the Council wishes young people who are at risk of joining gangs to realise their worth and take a more active role in the governance of the City, it is essential that they understand the democratic process and are aware of how they can cast the votes to which they are entitled.

Response

- 3.50 *See response to Recommendation 5. There are various participation groups through which this can be progressed and the best means of doing this can be discussed with Voices in Action. Appropriate materials will need to be developed especially to ensure effective contact with specific communities, e.g. Roma/Slovak or groups of disabled young people. Trained young people regularly take part in the appointment of senior officers in the Children and Young People's Department and some partner agencies. This is one example of where that involvement might be widened to more groups.*

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Background papers:	None		
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications		

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 The partners that constitute the Community Safety Partnership contribute annual funding to the partnership for its frontline services and infrastructure, as well as targeting their own services according to priorities. This includes the work related to the gang culture referred to in the report.
- 1.2 As noted in the main body of the report, all stakeholder public services are now facing a challenging budget situation, which will become increasingly difficult in future. The prioritising and targeting of activities in the light of the level of dangers faced and the refocusing of existing resources will underpin this.

Legal

2. None.

Personnel

3. None.

Equalities Impact

4. Those associating with gangs will in many cases have had disrupted lives and failed in their education, lacking motivation to succeed in the mainstream. Greater equality of outcomes and opportunities is therefore an important broad aim, which is contained in the city's Children and Young People's Plan in order to address a wide range of consequences of low achievement and aspiration.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. Work to address gang culture reflects the Corporate Plan priority of **Making us proud of our neighbourhoods**. There are also elements of **Supporting everyone in learning and achieving** and **Helping us all to be healthy, active and independent** (safeguarding) which will make a broader contribution.