

# LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

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| <b>REPORT:</b>                        | <b>CABINET</b>   |        |
| <b>DATE OF DECISION</b>               | <b>27<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>  |        |
| <b>REPORT TITLE:</b>                  | <b>Youth Safety Delivery Plan</b>  |        |
| <b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:</b> | <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Nick Hibberd</b><br/>Corporate Director of Sustainable Communities, Regeneration &amp; Economic Recovery</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Debbie Jones</b><br/>Corporate Director for Children and Young People</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Kristian Aspinall</b><br/>Director of Culture &amp; Community Safety</p> |        |
| <b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>                  | <b>Kristian Aspinall</b><br><u><a href="mailto:Kristian.aspinall@croydon.gov.uk">Kristian.aspinall@croydon.gov.uk</a></u>  |        |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>                   | <b>Councillor Ola Kolade</b><br>Cabinet Member for Community Safety<br><b>Councillor Maria Gatland</b><br>Cabinet Member for Children and Young People   |        |
| <b>KEY DECISION?</b>                  | <b>No</b>  | N/A    |
| <b>CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?</b>   | <b>No</b>  | Public |
| <b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>                | <i>All</i>   |        |

## 1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1** This report outlines the work done in the last 12 months to deliver on the Executive Mayor’s commitment to making Croydon’s streets safer for young people, the plan for the next three years of action, and the commitments to partnership working with the voluntary sector and community to tackle violence.
- 1.2** The plan is attached as Appendix 1. For the context of this work, younger people include people aged 11 to 25.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, the Executive Mayor in Cabinet, is recommended:

- 2.1 To endorse the work delivered to improve youth safety in the last year.
- 2.2 To agree the plan contained in appendix 1 as the three-year delivery plan.
- 2.3 To support the development of public health funded initiatives to improve youth safety.
- 2.4 To agree the commitments to working with the voluntary sector and communities as outlined in the plan and section 6.

## 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Executive Mayor's Business Plan outlines his commitment to "make Croydon safer for young people", in addition to tackling knife crime and ensuring children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential.
- 3.2 Over the last twelve months, a significant amount of work has been delivered to make Croydon safer for young people. This follows the tragic murders of five teenagers in 2021 and the continued high levels of violence amongst young people in the borough. The work was delivered in partnership with and by the Council, Police, and voluntary sector. The work includes:
  - Additional investment in key areas such as Croydon Town Centre, Thornton Heath, New Addington and Shrublands, with 6 months of youth outreach work delivered by trusted local partners.
  - Rapid response to critical incidents in the borough, with local charities funded to deliver on-street youth work within 48 hours of an incident to help ease community tensions, support young people who may be affected, and prevent reprisals.
  - Multiple intervention programmes aimed at helping young people leave crime and not reoffend.
  - Dedicated Police robbery patrols to deter young people from being robbed.
  - Extra grants for summer holiday and back-to-school activity in key areas to provide more diversionary activity.
  - A new Substance Misuse Board to work across Health, Police, and Council to tackle the supply and demand of drugs in the borough which drives violence.
  - Smart watermarking for young people in schools to help deter robbery.
  - Closer working with British Transport Police on transport hub safety for young people.
  - A new Community Safety Engagement Board to allow all community groups, voluntary sector organisations, and businesses to help work with the partnership on making Croydon safer.

- Investment in our sports pitches across Croydon to provide more diversionary activity for young people.
- 3.3** A key example of the improvement of response was the multi-agency approach to issues on Church Street in Croydon Town centre. There were significant concerns around large groups of young people, knives, anti-social behaviour, and low-level crime aimed at local businesses. The Council, Police, and key community groups rapidly developed an intelligence profile drawing on statutory information and local qualitative information from the community. We then worked rapidly in partnership with local groups to put additional youth workers and outreach workers (from youth groups already active and with trusted relationships into the area), to help support young people and get them off the streets. This had an immediate noticeable effect, significantly reducing the number of young people at risk and preventing further violence and crime.
- 3.4** Comments and feedback from key partners and community groups at the MyEnds forum and the Community Safety Engagement Board reflect the improvement over the last year. Although there is an acknowledgement that there remains more to do, the speed of the Council's response and the willingness to work in new, innovative ways with community groups and partners has been recognised and praised as a step-change in how the borough tackles violence against young people.
- 3.5** The attached plan draws that work into a framework for delivery over the next three years, based on the key themes of:
- Prevention – stopping young people becoming at risk.
  - Intervention – supporting those young people at risk.
  - Disruption – tackling the gangs exploiting our young people.
  - Diversion – providing positive alternatives for young people.
- 3.6** It has been developed in consultation with key partners and will continue to be developed with the voluntary sector, communities, and young people over the lifespan of the plan.
- 3.7** This plan directly links to, and was developed alongside, the Youth Justice Plan, together. Both complement each other and work towards the same outcome – making Croydon safer for young people. This plan directly contributes towards the key performance indicators of the Youth Justice Plan in reducing the number of young people entering the criminal justice system.
- 3.8** The plan outlines an achievable series of actions that will lead to measurable improvements in safety for young people and is recommended for approval.

## **4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS**

- 4.1** Violence against young people has been unacceptably high in Croydon for many years. As section 3 of the plan outlines, Croydon has had some of the highest levels of violence involving young people in London, across various violent crime types.
- 4.2** We recognise that this violence is disproportionate. It affects young Black boys from the African and Afro-Caribbean community more than others, and as a result impacts

the Black community more than others. Tackling this inequality has been core to all the work delivered since and embedded within this new plan.

- 4.3** In recognition of this, the Council, statutory partners, and the voluntary sector have developed and delivered many significant pieces of work over the years to make Croydon Safer. Key to this was the Vulnerable Adolescent's Review in 2019, which looked at the multi-agency response to youth violence. This was developed into an action plan and delivered from 2019 to 2021 through the Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 4.4** Prior to developing the plan, the partnership explored other approaches across the country to better understand best practices. The research aimed to understand how plans were established, implemented and developed in partnership. Boroughs that face similar challenges and have similar demographics were included in the review. As a result, Croydon has incorporated ideas from other plans that can benefit the local area.
- 4.5** The plan takes into account key findings from recent high-profile case reviews which puts greater emphasis on preventive work. The findings will continue to feed into the ongoing delivery plan.
- 4.6** This new plan was developed in response to the Executive Mayor's commitment to making Croydon safer for young people and to tackle knife crime in Croydon. It builds on all the work delivered in recent years by the Council, the Police, and the Voluntary Sector. It is evidence-based and draws upon the annual Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment, the Vulnerable Adolescent's Review, and all the work and contributions of Croydon's voluntary sector and communities.
- 4.7** The plan will be delivered through a new "Youth Safety Delivery Board" that will be led by Community Safety and Children's Services with key partners from across the partnership. Each theme will have a key lead agency and will include and involve voluntary sector representatives, community members and young people in the design, development, and delivery of further actions. The board will report into the Community Safety Engagement Board, the new forum established in spring 2023 to empower and work with a wide range of Croydon's voluntary sector to make Croydon safer. Ultimately it will report into the statutory Community Safety Partnership and the Croydon Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- 4.8** This plan is a living document that will continue to be developed over its three-year lifespan. As outlined in the commitments to co-production and in recommendation 2.4, the next steps will be to work with communities to further develop each of the four theme, and to develop, with public health, funded interventions for the lifespan of the delivery plan.
- 4.9** Key areas for development when funding is identified (through Public Health or external funders) include:
- Young people not in Education, Employment, or training (NEETs).
  - Transitions (primary to secondary and 18+).

- What preventative and interventions look like for 18- to 25-year-olds.
- A more direct and resourced approach to embedding anti-racism in our practice.
- Trauma-informed practice in the voluntary sector.
- Work with the PRUs to reduce pupils in the PRUs and better protecting them.
- Better health integration and offer.

**4.8** All of these areas are in the current plan, but additional funding / resources will allow us to further develop and grow them.

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**5.1** One option was not to develop a delivery plan, and to continue the reactive responses to violence that the partnership has developed and delivered over the last year. However, doing so would inhibit a pro-active approach and long-term planning. It also would have prevented any development of long-term funding options and the ability to attract additional resources from outside Croydon.

**5.2** Another option was the development of a 10-year public health strategy. This option was not taken forward as it was felt that:

- Significant work on the long-term causes had already been delivered through the Vulnerable Adolescent's Review.
- Longer-term child exploitation and child protection strategies are being developed through Children's Services and the Children's Safeguarding work.
- There was a need to deliver on the Mayor's commitments and take action rapidly given the challenges facing Croydon.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

**6.1** *As outlined in section 5 of the plan, numerous organisations have fed into the work that forms the basis of this plan, both over the last six months and during the preceding years through the Vulnerable Adolescent Needs Assessment and other pieces.*

**6.2** *It is key to this plan's continued development and delivery to work in true partnership with residents, voluntary sector organisations, and especially young people through relevant engagement opportunities such as those provided by the Croydon Youth Forum. As such we are making several key consultation commitments for this work:*

- We will develop sub-groups from the Community Safety Engagement Board to ensure each of the four themes has specific plans and projects from the voluntary sector and communities.
- We will ensure this plan is presented at multiple community engagement events throughout its lifespan and seek feedback.
- We will be honest and about its successes and failures, focusing on learning from projects that did not achieve their goals and ensuring that young people

and young adults involved in projects are part of the evaluation.

- We will treat the voices of voluntary sector groups as equals in every sense, recognising their expertise, knowledge, and trusted relationships.
- We will never stop looking for better ways to include young people, their families, and their communities in projects and the overall delivery plan.

## **7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

**7.1** This plan directly contributes towards two key objectives in the Executive Mayor's Business Plan:

"Make Croydon safer for young people"

"Tackle anti-social behaviour, knife crime, and violence against women and girls so that Croydon feels safer"

It will also contribute to the headline objective that "Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential" for the work delivered to under 18s.

**7.2** This plan also delivers on one of the three objectives of the Croydon Safer Partnership: tackling violence against young people.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of this report and its recommendations. Approval of the recommendations may assist with the development of long-term funding options and the ability to attract additional resources from outside Croydon.

8.1.2 Comments approved by Darrell Jones Acting Head of Finance, for Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery Department on behalf of the Director of Finance. 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023

### **8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.2.1 Although there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, the Council has several statutory duties to children and young people who are the intended recipients of the targeted intervention and support described in this Report. These include:

8.2.2 Section 17 Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need.

- 8.2.3 Sections 10-11 Children Act 2004 to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to promote cooperation between the Council and its relevant partners to ensure that children's wellbeing is improved.
- 8.2.4 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1989 to exercise its functions with due regard to the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and re-offending.

Comments approved by the Head of Social Care & Education Law on behalf of the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. (Date 16/08/2023)

### **8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.3.1 The Council has a statutory duty, when exercising its functions, to comply with the provisions set out in the Sec 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council must, in the performance of its functions, therefore, have due regard to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.3.2** Violence involving young people is a significantly disproportional crime, where the victims are far more likely to be young Black boys than any other demographic and out of line with the local population.
- 8.3.3 This plan acknowledges and recognises the equalities issues, and in the work delivered to date the Black community has been specifically consulted and involved in provision and interventions.
- 8.3.4 The plan will address this disproportionality and ensure that we take a culturally competent approach to all our commissioned services and projects. This will include ensuring that young people and the Black community are involved, and their voices heard in all stages of the plan.
- 8.3.5 An EQIA has been carried out and shows largely no adverse impact on any protected groups. However, as no data is provided because third parties mainly hold it, it is difficult to evidence that conclusion.
- 8.3.6 Comments approved by Naseer Ahmad of the Equalities Programme Manager. (Date 17/08/2023)

## **9 APPENDICES**

**9.1** A Youth Safety Delivery Plan

**9.2** B Equality Analysis Form

## **10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

N/A