

AGENDA ITEM 6

Essex Police and Crime Panel	EPCP/20/16
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Report Title Tackling Gangs in Essex

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1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Tackling Gangs and organised crime is one of the priorities within the new Police and Crime Plan. This report provides the Panel with:
- i) an overview of the approach to dealing with gangs within Essex
 - ii) activity by Essex Police and partners to tackle gangs, including the development of a Violence Prevention Strategy
 - iii) a programme of commissioning undertaken by the Office for the PCC to commission services to divert young people away from gang involvement.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Panel members note the report.

3.0 **Operation Raptor**

Operation Raptor is the operational approach taken by Essex Police and its partners to deal with the emerging issues of gangs within Essex.

3.1 **Definition of 'Gangs':**

A 'gang' is defined as a "...*relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, and (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence. They may also have any or all of the following features, (3) identify with, or lay claim over territory, (4) have some form of identifying structure feature and (5) are in conflict with other, similar gangs*" (National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) definition derived from the Centre for Social Justice 'Dying to Belong' and the Home Office 'Ending Gangs and Youth Violence').

3.2 **Definition of 'Gang Nominal':**

A 'gang nominal' is defined as "*someone who has been identified as being a member of a gang and this is corroborated by intelligence from more than one source (e.g. police, partner agencies or community intelligence)*".

A 'gang associate' is defined as "*someone who offends with gang members; or who is associated by police, partner agencies or community intelligence, with gang members; or who has displayed through conduct or behaviour, a specific desire or intent to become a member of a gang*".

3.3 **Definition of 'Gang Crime':**

A 'gang crime' is "*Any gang-related crimes or crime-related incidents are such events where any individual believes that there is a link to the activities of a gang or gangs*".

3.4 **Definition of 'County Lines':**

The model known as county lines refers to the use of a single telephone number for ordering drugs, operated from outside the area, which becomes the group's brand. The gangs begin by taking over premises in the target town, sometimes by coercion, by using property belonging to local addicts who are paid in drugs, or by beginning a relationship with a vulnerable female. They use common marketing tactics to get established, including introductory offers. They will then expand the workforce, recruiting local runners to deliver drugs and money.

The groups often use children, because they work for little pay, are easy to control, and are less likely to be detected. Most runners are boys aged between 14 and 17, and grooming with gifts and money to control them via a 'debt' is common. Where girls are used they sometimes also become the victims of sexual violence.

3.5 **National Developments**

Home Office - Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation

The Home Office is also working with the Department of Health to highlight the importance of linking with health services. *"We would like local hospitals and police and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to work closely together to share data that helps identify where violent incidents are taking place"*. This joint working supports planning and early intervention by ensuring effective local measures can be put in place by the police and its local partners to help prevent and reduce such violent incidents taking place.

To assist this, the Department of Health has published an information sharing standard for Accident and Emergency departments in hospitals which sets out the minimum level of data they are required to collect and share with the police and CSPs. Violence Reduction Nurses have been appointed at up to 12 major trauma centres, to promote data sharing, to build links with CSPs and to support other nearby hospitals.

3.6 **Local Activity**

One of the priorities within the new Police and Crime Plan is to tackle gangs and organised crime. This reflects an increase in gang-related activity within the County, evidenced through a number of Local Assessment Process (LAP) reports conducted through the Home Office Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme. The priority within the Police and Crime Plan includes a number of commitments, including;

- Develop and deliver on a Gangs Strategy as part of the wider Violence Prevention Strategy.
- Prevent the exploitation of children and vulnerable people by gangs through early intervention initiatives and jointly commissioning diversionary activities.
- Disrupt and prevent organised drug distribution through improved intelligence shared between the police, partners and local communities to limit the harm drugs cause.

These commitments will, in part, be delivered through improved local partnership working facilitated by Community Safety Hubs. These Hubs work to provide an enhanced service to the local community by ensuring public service organisations, voluntary services and business partners work intelligently together, including via co-location, to tackle priorities identified by the local community and recorded within the Community Safety Plan.

Violence Prevention Partnership Working

An initial meeting between the OPCC, NHS, Public Health England and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime occurred on 23rd September 2016. The objective of the group is to examine how partners can better work together towards violence prevention. The Institute of Community Safety (ICS) has been commissioned by the OPCC to develop a strategic framework to support the work to address violence and vulnerability. It has been agreed to develop the project in four key areas:

- 1) Data and intelligence sharing between agencies - this will build on the existing good practice of collecting violence-related admission data at Broomfield Accident and Emergency Department to inform licensing and community safety practices, and will seek to provide data to allow a focus of tactical activity.
- 2) Vulnerable locations - based upon the above, the identification of vulnerable locations within Essex and subsequent tactical activity. One such area will be to obtain a detailed understanding of the drug markets within Essex.
- 3) Awareness training - focusing on external front line partners, allowing them to identify person(s) and locations involved in urban street gangs.
- 4) Strategic links - the development of urban street gangs with our key strategic work already in existence (Violence Reduction Strategy).

4.0 Operation Raptor – Strategic Aims:

The strategic aims of Operation Raptor are:

- Minimise the risk to communities within Essex, including vulnerable members of the community who are targeted by members of urban street gangs.
- Prevent and detect crime related to gangs.
- Support key partners in their activity related to gangs.
- Maximise the safety of resources deployed to undertake tactical activity under Operation Raptor.

Essex Police has adopted the six key priorities listed in the Home Office 'Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (2016)':

- 1) Tackle county lines – the exploitation of vulnerable people by a hard core of gang members to sell drugs.
- 2) Protect vulnerable locations – places where vulnerable young people can be targeted, including pupil referral units and care homes.
- 3) Reduce violence and knife crime – including improving the way national and local partners use tools and powers.
- 4) Safeguard gang-associated women and girls – including strengthening local practices.

- 5) Promote early intervention – using evidence from the Early Intervention Foundation to identify and support vulnerable children and young people (including identifying mental health problems).
- 6) Promote meaningful alternatives to gangs – such as skills development, education, training and employment.

The work undertaken on Operation Raptor forms part of the Essex Police Violence Reduction Strategy. **Appendix A** provides the plan on a page regarding the Violence Reduction Strategy. **Appendix B** provides the plan on a page regarding Operation Raptor. The plan is designed to be a multi-agency document, highlighting the approach taken to urban street gangs.

4.1 Raptor Teams

All three Local Policing Areas (LPAs) now have established Operation Raptor enforcement teams. The focus of these teams is to carry out enforcement activity focused towards disrupting gang activity. The teams can come together if required in response to a specific issue, or work as individual teams on their respective LPAs. They are supported as required by specialist teams.

4.2 Analytical Assessment of Operation Raptor Nominals

To ensure activity is focused against those nominals that pose the greatest threat, risk and harm, a specific analytical product for Raptor has been developed. The product is now included in both Local Coordination Meetings (LCOM) and Essex County Tasking and Coordination Group (ECTCG) meetings. This list is also shared with key partners at Community Safety Meetings (CSM) and local gang tasking meetings. Intelligence is also shared with the Metropolitan Police Service – Operation Trident.

4.3 Local Gang Tasking Meetings

Each LPA holds a monthly gang tasking meeting. This is a multi-agency meeting designed to ensure that all partners are aware of current activity, and is designed to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

4.4 Use of Special Constabulary

In order to support Operation Raptor teams and to contribute to Special Constabulary retention, the ability to embed the Special Constabulary on Raptor teams is being developed.

4.5 Information Sharing

Information sharing protocols are being developed with external partners. There are a number of external charities and agencies working in the area of urban street gangs and

developing partnership working with these teams is essential to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

4.6 Operation Raptor Strategic Review Group

A strategic review group has been established to review the progress of Operation Raptor. The group meets on a quarterly basis and consists of key partners.

4.7 OPCC – Seed Funding Regarding Diversionary Activity

Following the Urban Street Gangs Conference in June, the PCC announced £100,000.00 of seed funding regarding diversionary activity. A specification was developed that sought to identify a delivery partner to provide mentoring to young people to prevent them being exploited by gangs, and to raise awareness amongst professionals of appropriate referral pathways for those at risk. An evaluation panel consisting of the OPCC, Essex Police and the Community Safety Manager has shortlisted a number of applicants and a decision will be made on the provider shortly. It is anticipated that the new service will be ready to go live in January 2017.

4.8 Youth Violence Intervention Project (YVIP)

Following on from work with the Red Thread YVIP Project by the Metropolitan Police Service and The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, Basildon's Community Safety Partnership has agreed to trial the YVIP at the Basildon Accident and Emergency Department. The Community Safety Partnership has dedicated a member of staff to progress the initiative. The initiative focuses on the 'Teachable Moment', the introduction of a youth support worker within Accident and Emergency to undertake diversionary activity at the point where the victim is at their most vulnerable. The majority of victims in urban street gangs are also known perpetrators.

5.0 Operation Sceptre

Essex Police participates in Operation Sceptre, which is a national objective regarding knife crime. This is an on-going operation, with the last week of action in Essex occurring the week commencing 17th October 2016.

During this week, Essex Police and partners participated in a number of strands of activity including media activity in relation to knife amnesty bins and test purchase operations of retailers.

Performance Summary

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

	Total		Total		Total
Knives Seized	6	Sec 1 PACE searches	44	Intel. submissions	32
Weapons Seized	Dog	Retail Premises Visited	25	No. of Engagement events	0
Total Arrests	12	No. of Retail Pass	22	No. of Education events	0
Knife/bladed arrest	0	No. of Retail Failures	3		

Appendix A (To note: The title of this has subsequently changed to Violence Prevention Strategy to reflect the overall aim to prevent violence)



Appendix B

