

<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>22 January 2020</b>
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<b>Report title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Review: Rewriting the Narrative – Youth Violent Crime</b>	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Jasbir Jaspal Public Health and Wellbeing	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	John Denley, Director of Public Health	
<b>Originating service</b>	Governance	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Julia Cleary Tel Email	Scrutiny and Systems Manager 01902 555046 Julia.cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Joint Children and Education Leadership Team Public Health Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Scrutiny Board	17 October 2019 22 October 2019 22 October 2019 29 October 2019

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**Recommendation for decision:**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the recommendations in the action plan as attached at appendix 1 to this report.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to endorse the recommendations and consider the allocation of resources including longer term funding and commissioning of services for those at risk of committing violence, becoming a victim of violence, or both.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 No one is born violent. Violence is preventable, and it is often the circumstances surrounding an individual at an early age that either puts them at a higher risk of becoming violent or provides them with the tools to lead a fulfilling and rewarding life. This report highlights the importance of early intervention and the necessity of training for all those who have direct contact with young people to enable them to spot the signs of adverse childhood experiences and to take appropriate action.
- 2.2 This report considers areas of good practice already taking place within the city such as Catch 22, Eyes to Success, the Summer Squad and Believe to Achieve and the good work being carried out by the Council's own Youth Offending Service and Community Safety Team. Alongside this, the report provides evidence and examples of successful initiatives carried out by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and makes a number of recommendations regarding how these initiatives can be fed into the future West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit.
- 2.3 The report highlights the need to increase employment opportunities to help mitigate the risk factors associated with violence. By equipping our young people with a skill and providing them with an alternative role model in the work place, many of the risk factors associated with violence can be mitigated.
- 2.4 The report also considers the important role that the community will play in providing a sense of belonging for young people to provide them with somewhere to go, something to do and someone to show them that there is an alternative.
- 2.5 We must all take responsibility for our young people and their futures and together provide them with the opportunities, tools and skills they need to write their own, successful narratives.
- 2.6 The overarching aim of the review was to make recommendations to reduce violent crime in young people across Wolverhampton and strengthen prevention and resilience by identifying the risk factors and causes of violent crime.
- 2.7 The review did not define an explicit age, this was to avoid restrictions on applying data and inviting input from a range of services and people, many of which will not work to prescribed age bands. However, to provide some consistency with recognised definitions, the review broadly recognised young people being up to the age of 24. All genders and geography across Wolverhampton were in scope for this review.

- 2.8 To ensure a common shared understanding of what violence is, the review took guidance from the World Health Organisation's Violence Prevention Alliance, which defines violence as 'the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.'
- 2.9 The review specifically aimed to:
- Examine and understand the current situation regarding violent youth crime in the city;
  - Gather information and evidence regarding youth crime in the city;
  - Question witnesses and experts from partner organisations, groups and communities regarding their experiences of youth crime in the city;
  - To make recommendations based on the evidence collected and to work with partners to see these recommendations implemented.
- 2.10 Consequently, the review aimed to identify evidence based, long term recommendations to underpin and enhance the work already being carried out in Wolverhampton by the council and its partners.

### **3.0 Discussion**

- 3.1 The cross-party review provided the platform for placing violence prevention at the heart of our council commitment to ensure everyone in Wolverhampton can live their lives in a safe and supportive environment.
- 3.2 Exposure to violence affects young people's physical and emotional wellbeing. This can have an impact throughout their life course meaning they are more likely to be exposed to a range of health damaging behaviours, as well as impacting negatively upon their education, employment and future life opportunities.
- 3.3 Evidence gathered and provided to the Group has highlighted the fact that good work, good initiatives, good people and good organisations are already in existence in Wolverhampton and are working hard to support our young people and to help them to make the right choices in life. This needs to be sustained, supported and where possible rolled out further and this is where the recommendations focus.
- 3.4 The recommendations seek to support and uplift good, existing work where it has been identified and the Group seek assurances that where initiatives have proven successful that all possible steps are taken to ensure the good work can continue.

- 3.5 Where best practice has been identified from organisations and initiatives such as Catch 22, Believe to Achieve and Girls Allowed; this needs to be celebrated and our young people recognised. These groups and initiatives require stability to carry out their work and this needs sustained funding. The Group seek assurance from the Council that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure that successful community groups and youth empowerment services be able to continue with the exemplary work they currently do.
- 3.6 We all need to work together to identify where problems exist and to help provide the solutions. Training, community cohesion, employment opportunities, education and sustained funded activities and interventions for our young people are all areas that will provide them with the tools they need to succeed in creating their own success.

#### **4.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

- 4.1 The review group were presented with evidence for consideration when agreeing their findings and recommendations. The minutes and other documents considered at the evidence sessions are available on request.

#### **5.0 Reasons for decision(s)**

- 5.1 These 10 key recommendations aim to support, enhance and share, existing good work where it has been identified and to seek assurances that where initiatives have proven successful that all possible steps are taken to ensure that these can continue.
- 5.2 It is not the intention of the Review Group to prescribe in detail how this is done but to ensure that those with the knowledge, expertise and resources; who are best placed to make such judgements are supported and encouraged to do so.

#### **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 The report itself does not have any direct financial implications but there are a number of recommendations that will, if endorsed by Cabinet require financial support. The financial implications in pursuit of these recommendations will be identified in future reports to Councillors.

[AS/25102019/D]

#### **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

[TC/21102019/P]

#### **8.0 Equalities implications**

- 8.1 This report has direct equality implications as it looks at supporting young people at risk of engaging in violent crime. Many of these young people may belong to an ethnic group, be vulnerable or unemployed.

8.2 Ongoing monitoring will need to be undertaken to assess who is or is not receiving appropriate support.

## **9.0 Climate change and environmental implications**

9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the recommendations in the review report.

## **10.0 Human resources implications**

10.1 There are no human resources implications arising from the recommendations in the review report.

## **11.0 Corporate landlord implications**

11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from the recommendations in the review report.

## **12.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

12.1 The Group were committed to taking a systematic approach to this review and were aware of the heralded public health approach to tackling violence.

‘Violence is a public health issue. Living without the fear of violence is a fundamental requirement for health and wellbeing’ (Public Health England).

12.2 Globally and within the UK, it is recognised that taking a public health approach to violence will yield long term change. Over recent years there has been greater acknowledgement of the significant role public health can play in addressing violence. The relative importance of violence as a public health issue is clearly illustrated by the results of the 2013 Global Burden of Disease Study, which shows that interpersonal violence and self-harm are among the top 25 causes of global years of life lost.

12.3 Violence should be treated parallel to any complex health problem, as the predisposing risk factors to violence are changeable and preventable. Taking a public health approach enables a comprehensive understanding of these risk factors, which is fundamental when implementing interventions to prevent violence.

12.4 Taking a public health approach enables population level change and shifts the focus away from acute interventions, whether that be measures deployed in time of crisis or at individual behaviour change level, and brings a focus on prevention and early intervention. Public health approaches bring a life course lens to the problem, identifying key points during the life time where risk factors are more influential and prevalent and evaluates how interventions can be shaped to tackle these risks.

## **13.0 Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Action Plan

13.2 Appendix 2 - Scrutiny Review: Rewriting the Narrative – Youth Violent Crime