

SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 2 – KNIFE CRIME AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

MINUTES

Thursday 4th April 2019

PRESENT: Councillors: Aysha Raza (Chair), Praveen Anand, Jon Ball, Carlo Lusuardi, Tariq Mahmood, Chris Summers and Simon Woodroofe.

Co-opted Member:

Elly Heaton-Virgo - Chief Executive, Young Ealing Foundation

LBE Officers:

Harjeet Bains	- Scrutiny Review Officer
Charles Barnard	- Assistant Director Integrated Early Years, Preventative and Youth Services
David Colley	- Regeneration Manager (Housing Development)
Steve Curtis	- YES Project Participation Worker
Ian Jenkins	- Head of Integrated Youth Service
Janine Jenkinson	- Democratic Services Officer
Paul Murphy	- Operations Manager, Community Safety
Kimberley Newitt	- Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator

External Representatives

Izzabella Audouin	- Young Ealing Safeguarding (YES)
Jonathan Langley	- Young Ealing Safeguarding (YES)

1. Apologies for Absence

(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Seema Kumar (Vice Chair) and Rajinder Mann.

2. Declarations of Interest

(Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

3. Matters to be Considered in Private

(Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

4. Minutes

(Agenda Item 4)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2019 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5. Regeneration and Planning of Housing Estates in the Borough (Agenda Item 5)

The Regeneration Manager presented a report that detailed how the regeneration and planning of the borough's housing estates was undertaken to ensure the design was inclusive and promoted safety.

He explained that for each of the estates identified for regeneration, extensive and meaningful engagement with residents over an extended period provided a basis to progress each scheme. On each estate, residents had been encouraged to get involved through surveys, drop-ins, public meetings, exhibitions and the establishment of Residents' Steering Groups. On South Acton Estate, youth engagement had been carried out in Berrymede Infant and Junior Schools and Bollo Brook Youth Centre. Architects had visited the schools to share ideas for the scheme and community boards had been set up to allow young people to leave their ideas for consideration. The Council's Park Team had also canvassed young people for their views on how the open space could be used.

The Panel was informed that the regeneration schemes undertaken in Ealing ensured that all residents' needs were identified and understood. All residents were ultimately rehoused in new homes or, if they wished to leave an estate, in other homes in the borough that were the right size for their household. New estates were designed to improve safety, and architects and developers worked with the police to ensure schemes were 'secure by design'.

In addition, the Greater London Authority's Affordable Home Programme had a number of requirements in relation to meeting the housing design and sustainability standards. Detailed guidance was also contained in both the London Plan and the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance. The process of sign-off by the Metropolitan Police's Secure by Design Officer looked at designs submitted for planning consent and made recommendations to ensure security, and that crime was discouraged or 'designed out' of new estates. Wherever feasible building frontages were located on the street to ensure passive surveillance, and potentially insecure areas were gated or re-designed. Extensive use of CCTV was also built into any new development, and this was either linked to the police or Ealing Council's CCTV control room.

To promote and ensure community cohesion any community centre or facility demolished as part of the estate redevelopment was replaced, and a new facility was built in liaison with affected residents. In South Acton Estate, a new community hub included a new youth centre, along with extensive community facilities for the use of residents. The housing association had also engaged Manor House Trust to run the new community hub, and would be building community cohesion through the development of a local community strategy in partnership with local residents. A key part of the strategy was to determine priorities for youth engagement. Youth projects would be funded via the L&Q Foundation, Community Chest and other match-funded sources.

The Chair thanked the Regeneration Manager for the presentation and invited questions from the Panel.

Questions

Councillor Summers said he considered undercrofts to be a wasted use of land. He asked if it was possible to design safe underground car parking spaces in a way that would not attract anti-social behaviour.

The Regeneration Manager said this was a challenge. Key fob entrance was sometimes used but even with this security measure, underground car parks were not as safe and secure as overground car parks.

Councillor Mahmood asked if the Regeneration Manager could provide some examples of regenerated estates which had experienced a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Woodroffe said it was unfortunate that the Bollo Youth Centre on South Acton Estate was smaller than the temporary centre that had been provided.

Elly Heaton-Virgo asked if the new youth centre located on South Acton Estate would be used solely for youth provision or as a multi-purpose venue.

The Regeneration Manager confirmed that the centre would be used as a community hub which included a self contained youth service.

The Head of Integrated Youth Service reported that residents were getting used to the new centre. He explained that the temporary accommodation had been larger than the original centre but he confirmed that the new centre was the same size as the original centre. Due to the smaller space the facilities and activities on offer in the new youth centre would be limited. The new centre would be officially opened in early May 2019.

Councillor Lusuardi referred to crime rates and the perception of crime and asked if residents felt safer living on the regenerated South Acton Estate.

The Regeneration Manager said there had been very few studies undertaken regarding the regeneration of housing estates and the well-being of residents post-development. At South Acton, Acton Gardens LLP were conducting a longitudinal study in association with Reading University and the Council, and early indications were positive.

Elly Heaton-Virgo asked what percentage of residents that lived in Acton Gardens were new residents.

The Regeneration Manager explained that in the first phase development 80% of residents chose to move way. In the current phase, phase 6, 90% of residents wanted to be rehoused in Acton Gardens. He said that half of the new homes being built were categorised as affordable, and half were for market sale. Eighty percent of the affordable homes were for social rent (largely for transferring tenants) with the remainder shared equity (for transferring leaseholders) or shared ownership.

Elly Heaton-Virgo asked if the demographics of the area had had an impact on the level of crime in the area.

The Regeneration Manager said that it was important that the area had a sustainable population and this meant a mixed community, rather than a concentration of a particular group of people in one area, which he said was what South Acton Estate had been in the past. Crime rates at South Acton have dropped considerably since before the regeneration programme started.

Councillor Summers referred to the table set out in section 1.1.3 of the report which indicated the current position of each housing estate and whether it was being redeveloped by the Council or a partner. He noted that a number of estates had not been included in the table, including Racecourse Estate, in his ward. He said there were issues relating to gangs and knife crime on Racecourse Estate, and asked if there was any regeneration scheduled for the estate.

The Regeneration Manager explained that an Estates Review study had been carried out in 2008 and the findings of the study had been used to determine which estates to regenerate. The estates considered the 'worst' had been chosen for redevelopment first.

Elly Heaton-Virgo informed the Panel that a former undercroft space in Havelock Estate had been transformed into a community space.

The Regeneration Manager explained that he had not worked on the design of the Havelock Estate, but understood that the scheme was being reconsidered and the developers were 'going back to the drawing board'.

The Head of Integrated Youth Service said that many young people who moved away from the South Acton area had expressed a sense of isolation and fear. He explained that young people living in unfamiliar areas were more likely to consider carrying a knife, reasoning that they would be safer and able to protect themselves.

In relation to tenure the Regeneration Manager advised that developments were always mixed and built tenure 'blind' and there were no visible differences between the socially rented, affordable and privately owned homes. He advised that planning regulations required schemes to be built in this way in Ealing. With regard to the movement of residents, he explained that residents were moved block by block, and communities were always moved together. Neighbours could choose to stay as neighbours. He said there would always be an element of dislocation, which was minimised as much as possible. He was not sure what else could be done to overcome it any further. He said that no residents of South Acton Estate had been moved any further than a quarter of a mile from where they had originally lived. He explained that residents were given the choice to move into alternative properties in the borough, although very few were now choosing to move away. He said that residents also had the right to return if they could not be immediately moved to one of the new build homes.

The Assistant Director Integrated Early Years, Preventative and Youth Services highlighted that the new properties were unaffordable for many young people.

The Regeneration Manager reported that to date the regeneration of South Acton Estate had created 28 construction apprenticeships for local residents. He said developers were keen to invest in local labour and provide opportunities for people to train and gain skills and work experience.

Elly Heaton-Virgo referred to the table set out in section 1.1.3 of the report, which listed the estates in the borough currently being redeveloped and asked if youth clubs would be provided as part of these regeneration schemes.

The Regeneration Manager said that the other regeneration schemes were smaller scale than South Acton Estate and it was unlikely they would include community centres. He explained that South Acton Estate would provide 3,500 units whereas the other schemes would create much fewer. There would be less private unit sales to support the expenditure needed to provide a youth centre on the other estates.

The Chair asked about the Greenford Quay development.

The Regeneration Manager advised that Greenford Quay was a private development on private land.

The Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator highlighted that for many young residents of South Acton Estate the flats were unaffordable and this created a sense amongst young people that the new regenerated scheme 'was not for them'.

Councillor Ball asked about the length of time to build the homes and how the developer marketed the buy to rent and private sale units.

The Regeneration Manager said one of the reasons for the 'broken housing market' was due to developers rationing the supply of units. He said there was a 'drag anchor' whereby the units released were limited to avoid flooding the market and ensuring the units retained a competitive value.

Elly Heaton-Virgo asked if a proportion of Section 106 (S106) monies generated by a scheme could be used to provide youth facilities on site.

The Regeneration Manager explained that Government set the level of S106 which could be levied from a developer. A formula known as the 'Wandsworth model' was used to calculate the tariff payable to the education authority. He explained that social rented properties were not self funding and the sale of private units was used to part subsidise this provision. S106 contributions were used to fund infrastructure facilities such as education, health and highways, but there was no particular category for youth provision.

The Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator raised concern that there was a lack of provision for 13-19 year olds and many services were being reduced or withdrawn. She said that young people felt that their areas were being 'built up' and then they were forced to 'move on'. She said the consequence of removing youth provision was an increase in anti-social behaviour and then further resources were needed to 'clean up the mess'.

Izzabella Audouin welcomed the apprenticeship scheme for young local people, but noted that the apprenticeships offered were in construction and this type of work would not appeal to all young people.

Councillor Mahmood asked if it would be possible to introduce a new category and ask developers to contribute to youth provision. In addition, he asked how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was collected.

The Regeneration Manager explained that the parameters of S106 were determined by Government and set out in national planning policy. The remit for how tariffs were levied and how they could be used was restricted and did not allow for flexibility. With regard to CIL he advised that this was calculated as a percentage of the development area and could be used more flexibly by the Council than S106. He said that councillors could decide how to spend the CIL monies collected.

Elly Heaton-Virgo asked if the Council was able to stipulate in a tender contract that a 'community minded developer' would be considered more favourably.

The Regeneration Manager confirmed that 'community mindedness' was taken into consideration and was used as a criterion. He said that this had been a criterion in awarding the contract for Phase 6 of Copley Close regeneration. The contract was valued at circa £50 to £55 million and had included a requirement to provide a 'piazza' area. He reported that a resident had sat on the selection panel that had awarded the contract.

Councillor Woodroffe highlighted that the operation of a youth centre required on-going running costs such as staffing and electricity.

Elly Heaton-Virgo explained that infrastructure funding was much more difficult to obtain than programme costs. She said there were many organisations and funders willing to provide support for the delivery of youth services.

Councillor Summers highlighted that there were estates in the borough not scheduled for regeneration and therefore would not be able to raise any S106 funds. He said S106 and CIL funding should be placed into a 'central pot' and used for any area in the borough that required regeneration work to be undertaken.

The Chair noted that knife crime tended to occur in areas on the borough boundary, such as Northolt and Greenford; however, these locations were also the areas with less infrastructure.

Councillor Mahmood asked what the average age was of the young people who attended the youth centre at South Acton Estate.

The Assistant Director Integrated Early Years, Preventative and Youth Services said this data was available and could be circulated to the Panel. He explained that there were fewer primary school aged children living in the borough but the number of high school pupils in the borough was continuing to rise.

Elly Heaton-Virgo informed the Panel about an initiative called Venue Bank. She explained that people used the Venue Bank to list cheap or free facilities they had

available and people looking for spaces could search for suitable venues. She mentioned that the Grand Union Village was a facility often underused.

Councillor Mahmood mentioned that the David Lloyd leisure centre in Acton had offered the use of its pool and facilities to under privileged residents.

Elly Heaton-Virgo also mentioned a 'BetterPoints' app and explained that residents could use the points earned through the app to exchange for activities such as a free swim. She said that the points could also be donated to local charities.

Resolved: That the Panel noted the presentation provided.

6. Young Ealing Safeguarding Group (YES) – Anti-Knife Programme (Agenda Item 6)

The Head of Integrated Youth Service introduced the report and drew the Panel's attention to the views of young people captured in appendices A and B of the report.

Jonathan Langley and Izzabella Audouin, members of the Young Ealing Safeguarding (YES) group introduced themselves to the Panel. They explained to the Panel that the YES group had developed over the past 18 months into a group of young people keen to engage and support the Ealing Safeguarding Children's Board to deliver programmes to keep their peers and themselves safe. Members of the group were from diverse backgrounds, aged 14-19 years old. The group met every Monday evening at Westside Youth Club, where they created and planned a work programme. Members of the group cooked together, debated issues and played games.

Izzabella Audouin explained that members of the group had discussed the issue of knife crime and its causes. A document listing young people's views on the causes and solutions to knife crime was circulated to the Panel.

Izzabella Audouin said that many young people carried knives because they were fearful and wanted to protect themselves. She highlighted the importance of engaging with young people and suggested that young people could be asked to design a graphic for the knife bins and asked to indicate the most suitable locations to site the bins. The Yes group had worked on the Medlar Farm Estate in Northolt supporting the Future Youth Inspired Programme delivering an anti-knife message. The group had produced the following recommendations to progress its work in relation to knife crime: commissioning first aid courses for young people to be confident to know what actions to take if a young person was stabbed and working with police cadets on joint initiatives. The group intended to provide an anti-knife crime workshop to inform young people about the dangers of carrying knives and the consequences of making bad choices.

The Panel was informed that the group were currently creating an interactive film/story board montage that would demonstrated the consequences of carrying a knife. The group had also established a Twitter page and young people could contact the group directly.

The Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator explained that rather than telling young people not to carrying knives, the intention of the film was to engage with young people and foster discussion about the reasons it was not a good decision to carry a knife.

The Chair thanked Jonathan and Izzabella for the presentation and invited questions from the Panel.

Questions

Councillor Anand congratulated the YES group on its great work. He asked how members promoted awareness of the group and how young people were recruited to join.

Izzabella Audouin said the YES group was promoted through the Your Life You Choose workshops in schools and by word-of-mouth amongst young people. She explained that the Monday evening sessions were open to everyone and free to join.

The Head of Integrated Youth Service added that Head Teachers' promoted the YES group and Monday sessions to pupils.

Councillor Anand asked what support the Council could offer to the YES group to promote its work.

Izzabella Audouin said that the Council could support the creation of more YES groups and ensure there were facilities and activities for young people to get involved in. She said engaging with young people, inviting them to attend Council meetings helped to bridge the communication gap and raise young people's aspirations.

The Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator said that lots of young people were keen to engage in positive activities but there was a limit to the capacity Council officers had to reach the numbers of young people. She explained that whilst she was located on Medlar Farm Estate in Northolt, sixty young people had attended the sessions held.

The YES Project Participation Worker informed the Panel that he had trained seven young men aged 15-16 years old to become peer researchers.

Elly Heaton-Virgo asked if Jonathan and Izzabella were employees or volunteers.

Jonathan and Izzabella explained that they had both just finished college and currently had part-time jobs. They also received vouchers for the work they undertook with the YES group. They explained that they were motivated to work with the YES group because they wanted to work positively with young people in the community.

Councillor Lusuardi asked how old the average YES group member was.

Jonathan said the average member was 14 year olds. He was 19 years old, so one of the older members of the group.

Councillor Summers asked if young people from Northolt Mandeville travelled to attend the group meetings held on Medlar Farm Estate.

The Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator said that young people did not normally travel far to attend the meetings. She explained that she would be undertaking some summer outreach work and hoped to be located on four different estates along with colleagues from the Council's Housing Team. She said that one of the difficulties of doing outreach work was finding suitable venues, particularly in Northolt there was a lack of suitable facilities.

Councillor Summers asked about the causes of knife crime and the role of social media. He said that often reasons for knife crime were territorial and involved a personal slight or perceived disrespect escalating.

Izzabella Audouin referred to the handout circulated at the start of the meeting which listed the causes and solutions expressed by young people participants of the anti-knife workshop.

The Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator highlighted that it was not just gang members carrying knives, there was a range of young people who felt fearful and carried a knife for 'protection'. In addition, she said media coverage and images of 'zombie knives' added to young people's anxieties about safety and perpetuated a culture of fear.

The YES Project Participation Worker informed the Panel of a 'mentoring violence reduction' programme based on a model from Chicago, which had been used in Glasgow. He explained that mentors were trained to intervene, call-out and challenge low level inappropriate behaviours and language. He said mentors were trained to challenge inappropriate social norms, such as smoking and sexism. He explained that he aimed to build mentor capacity by training up young people, who could then go on to train others.

Councillor Ball said the YES group recommendation regarding the commission of first aid courses for young people was a brilliant idea and he felt the Panel should take up the recommendation in its report. In addition, he suggested that staff at the Horizon Centre in Hanwell may be able to offer some technical assistance to the YES group with the editing of the film/story board montage.

The YES Project Participation Worker said that he had spoken to potential first aid providers, a group called Street Doctors based in Hackney. Street Doctors had been established by a group of trainee doctors currently studying for their medical exams.

The Out of Schools Activities Co-ordinator said that discussions relating to mental health would be built into the workshops as knife crime had an impact on the daily life and well-being of young people who had witnessed or been involved in a stabbing.

Councillor Ball, referring to the list of solutions circulated by the YES group members noted that 'make drugs legal' had been suggested as a solution.

The YES Project Participation Worker explained that often drugs were a cause of knife crime. It was also noted that a young person could be given a criminal record for possession of cannabis, and this 'criminalised the young person' and had a detrimental impact on their future prospects.

The Operations Manager, Community Safety thanked the YES group members for their presentation and said they had provided important insight and understanding of the issues.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, expressed thanks to officers and the YES group members for their contributions.

Resolved: That the Panel noted the presentations provided.

7. Draft Final Report of Scrutiny Review Panel 2 – 2018-19 Knife Crime and Youth Engagement
(Agenda Item 7)

The Chair introduced the Panel's draft final report.

Councillor Woodrooffe queried paragraph 3.21 of the report which stated 'The highest number of weapon offences occurred in five Wards – East/South Acton, Elthorne, Greenford Broadway, Northfield and Southall Broadway wards'. He said he was surprised to see Northfield listed and asked the Scrutiny Officer to check this was correct. In addition, he noted that some of the graphics and tables in the report were blurred and this obscured the information presented. Referring to page 116 of the report he pointed out that he had attended the site visit to Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School but had not been included in the attendance list.

The Panel considered the proposed recommendations:

Recommendation 2: Ealing Council should engage more with the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) for matters relating to young men.

The Panel felt that the scope of the recommendation should be widened to all local youth groups.

It was therefore agreed that '...the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) for matters relating to young men' be deleted and replaced with 'local youth agencies'.

Recommendation 5: The Your Life You Choose Schools Anti-crime Project should consider engaging with primary school pupils regarding knife crime as by high school age it was more difficult and often too late to intervene.

The Panel agreed the recommendation should be amended to read 'The Your Life You Choose Schools Anti-crime Project should consider engaging with primary school pupils regarding knife crime.'

Recommendation 6: The Ward Forums should consider providing some funding for the administration of the Your Life You Choose Schools Anti-Crime Project.

The Panel noted that the format of the Ward Forums was changing and it was anticipated that meetings would cease sometime next year. Therefore, to future

proof this recommendation it was agreed that the words 'or its successor' should be inserted after the words 'Ward Forums'.

Recommendation 7: The Your Life You Choose Anti-Crime Project should consider liaising with representatives of the Somali Advice and Development Centre on engagement with the Somali community.

The Panel felt that the onus was on representatives of the Your Life You Choose organisation and representatives of the Somali Advice and Development Centre to contact each other. It was therefore agreed that this recommendation should be deleted.

Recommendation 8: The Somali Advice and Development Centre representatives should attend the Ward Forum meetings with a view to integrating the Somalis in the local communities.

The Panel felt that the onus was on the Somali Advice and Development Centre to engage with Ward Forums. It was agreed that this recommendation should be deleted.

Recommendation 9: The Somali Advice and Development Centre should apply to the Ward Forums for funding grants to further support their work with the local community.

The Panel felt that the scope of this recommendation should be widened to encourage all young people and youth organisations to attend Ward Forum meetings and apply for grant funding.

Recommendation 10: There should be youth representation on the Safer Neighbourhoods Board to ensure that issues relating to young people are heard directly at that level and solutions found accordingly.

The Panel felt the scope of the recommendation was too narrow and that all Council meetings should be 'youth friendly'.

It was agreed that the 'on the Safer Neighbourhoods Board' should be deleted and replaced with 'at all Council meetings'

Recommendation 11: The Council should consider asking social landlords to contribute towards the costs of the Parkguard service to ensure that a wider area of the borough is covered to further reduce antisocial behaviour and crime.

To strengthen the wording of the recommendation the Panel agreed that the words 'consider asking' should be deleted and replaced with 'ask'.

Recommendation 12: Ealing Police should consider recruiting more female officers to undertake stop and searches.

The Panel felt the police should be more representative of the local population. It was agreed that 'more female officers' should be deleted and replaced with 'more representative officers'.

Recommendation 13: The Stop and Search Community Monitoring Group should consider linking with the Your Life You Choose Schools Anti-Crime Project to raise awareness of their initiative.

The Panel felt that the Stop and Search Community Monitoring Group should link up with a broad range of youth organisations, either at a network event or virtually.

It was therefore agreed to delete the words ‘the Your Life You Choose Schools Anti-Crime Project’ and to replace these with the words ‘other youth organisations’.

Recommendation 14: Youth provision and engagement must be at the heart of most Council policy and resources focused here as this demographic in the borough has taken a direct hit of austerity.

To strengthen the recommendation it was agreed that the word ‘most’ should be deleted.

Recommendation 18: Knife crime is part of a bigger problem of drugs, gangs, child exploitation, etc. so there must be a unified response from all Council departments and partner agencies in dealing with these issues instead of silo working.

It was agreed that the recommendation be revised to read ‘Knife crime is part of a bigger problem of drugs, gangs, child exploitation, etc. so there must be a unified response from all Council departments.’

Recommendation 19: Ealing Council should appeal to vendors of knives not to sell them online as these should be accessible only from behind a counter like the sale of cigarettes.

It was agreed that on behalf of the Panel a letter from the Council could be sent to Amazon expressing its concern that knives could be purchased on its site.

Recommendation 21: A mental health first aider should be provided to all schools in the borough.

It was agreed that the words ‘provided to’ should be deleted and replaced with ‘present in’.

In addition the Panel requested that the following recommendations be included in the report:

- The Council be requested to use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 monies to deliver youth provision in areas identified in the borough as being in need.
- The ‘Venue Bank’ initiative be published on the Council’s website.
- As best practice, a Council housing tenant be invited to sit on the selection panel to determine the development partner for an estate regeneration scheme.

- An annual knife crime summit / youth engagement network event be established. The event should offer:
 - I. A small pot of grant funding
 - II. Advice about bid writing
 - III. lunch should be provided

- Public realm improvements to enhance the safety and ‘design out’ anti-social behaviour and crime be undertaken on the estates in the borough not currently scheduled for regeneration.

- That the estates regeneration study undertaken in 2008 be revisited and reviewed due to the changing demographics of the area.

- Local democracy week and Youth Mayor should be re-instated.

- Youth organisation should be encouraged to consider succession planning.

Resolved: The Panel:

- I. Agreed that the amended and additional recommendations, as detailed above should be included in the Panel’s Final Repot.**

- II. Agreed that the Chair (Councillor Raza) and Vice Chair (Councillor Kumar) be authorised to approve the final version of the report in time for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6 June 2019 and Cabinet meeting on 17 September 2019.**

The Chair thanked the Panel Members and officers for their hard work. Panel members thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for leading the Panel.

Councillor Aysha Raza, Chair.

The meeting ended at 9:45 p.m.