

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
COMMITTEE****YOUTH VIOLENCE AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report brings an update to Committee on developments since Nottinghamshire's Knife Crime Strategy was first presented to Committee in May 2019.
2. The report informs the Committee of Nottinghamshire Children & Families Services' approach to reducing the risk of Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation, including County Lines Exploitation, and seeks funding of up to £100,000 from contingency subject to the availability of external funding.

Information**Violence Reduction Unit**

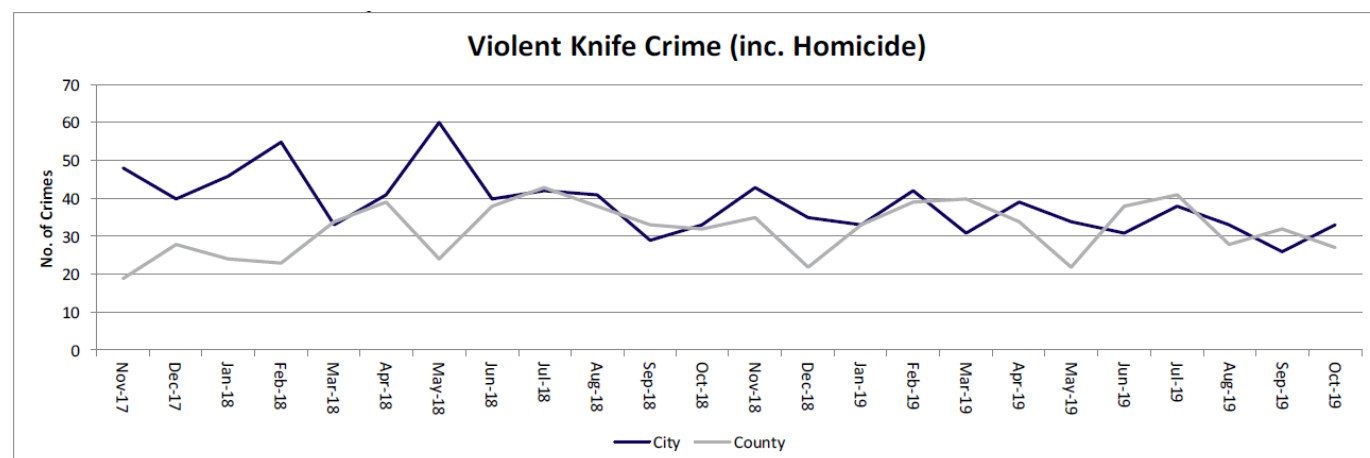
3. In July 2019, Nottinghamshire (inclusive of the City) was identified as one of 12 policing areas facing significantly high rates of violent crime. The police force was awarded circa £1million of surge funding which was to be spent on policing activity. In the summer of 2019, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was awarded an £880,000 Home Office allocation to establish a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).
4. The core function of the VRU is to offer leadership and, working with all relevant agencies operating locally, strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence. VRU activity enabled by the funding must support a multi-agency "public health" approach to preventing and tackling serious violence. Officers from Nottinghamshire County Council are seconded into the VRU to ensure a countywide approach which aligns with the authority's own approach to this area. The Corporate Director for Children & Families Services and the Director of Public Health are members of the VRU strategic board alongside their City counterparts, Chief Constable, head of the ambulance service and chief executives of local education providers.
5. The VRU is required to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) or 'Problem Profile' for Violence in Nottinghamshire by April 2020, which will inform a Violence Reduction Strategy and Tactical Plan. As such, the activity of the VRU has superseded that of the Knife Crime Strategy.

Violent Offending in Nottinghamshire

6. Current performance in reducing knife crime in Nottinghamshire is positive, with good reductions being seen this year. This goes against the national and regional trends of continuing increases. The 12 months to the end of October 2019 shows an 8.4% reduction in offences involving a knife in Nottinghamshire.

Offence	Nov 2017 - Oct 2018	Nov 2018 - Oct 2019	Change	% Change
Homicide	7	3	-4	-57.1%
Attempted Murder	5	3	-2	-40.0%
Threats to Kill	90	94	4	4.4%
Wounding/Endangering Life	213	218	5	2.3%
Assault with Injury	198	180	-18	-9.1%
Sexual Offences	19	5	-14	-73.7%
Robbery	351	306	-45	-12.8%
Total	883	809	-74	-8.4%

7. However, the overall reduction is a result of a larger reduction in the City, with a small increase in the County. The Knife Crime Strategy lead for the police states that the reduction in the City is as a result of the dedicated robbery team which has reduced weapon enabled robberies, previously of more concern in the City centre than elsewhere.



Offence	Nov 2017 - Oct 2018	Nov 2018 - Oct 2019	Change	% Change
City	508	418	-90	-17.7%
County	375	391	16	4.3%
Total	883	809	-74	-8.4%

Youth Work Mentors Project

8. In May 2019 Policy Committee approved the establishment of a number of Youth Worker posts whose work was to be targeted at young people at risk of violence. After a successful recruitment round the countywide youth work interventions project began in October 2019.

9. An information sharing and referral pathway has been developed and is in use with partners to ensure young people who are in most need of this service are able to access support and diversionary activities. The youth work intervention team is working in partnership with a variety of agencies, including housing, police, anti-social behaviour coordinators and neighbourhood wardens to gain key intelligence to ensure that the right groups and 'hotspot' locations are targeted. Youth workers are focusing their time working with young people, building relationships and trust through a range of positive activities.
10. In a short period of time there are several good examples of young people engaging well with youth workers and getting involved in a range of diversionary activities. For instance, the Friday night football project in Arnold regularly attracts around 60 young people per week. The youth work intervention team has linked with the local police who also attend and engage in the programme of activities. The team has produced several case studies alongside young people to highlight the outcomes and impact this programme is having on individuals as a direct result of youth work intervention.
11. Youth workers are signposting young people to existing provision when appropriate and safe to do so. In addition, the youth work intervention team has delivered several knife crime awareness sessions in youth centres and mobile provision. To date the team has engaged with 88 individual young people (this does not include young people who have engaged in the preventative youth work sessions in youth centres and mobile provision).

Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation

12. The work of the VRU and Knife Crime Strategy sits alongside Nottinghamshire's overall response to serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.
13. As reported to Committee in May 2019, the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NSCP) has established a multi-agency steering group to develop the approach to and oversee multi-agency activity in relation to Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation. This includes all activity against the children's themes of the Knife Crime Strategy and will report to both the NSCP and the Safer Nottinghamshire Board through the knife crime strategy delivery group. The steering group has a particular role in overseeing the activity of the Multi-Agency Serious Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Panel.
14. The Multi-Agency Serious Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Panel (also as previously reported), made up of senior colleagues from across the NSCP (established in January 2019) has continued to meet on a monthly basis to consider those young people in the County seen as being at the greatest level of risk. Since March 2019, 55 young people have been discussed at panel, of whom 51 were male and 4 female. A 'cohort approach' has been developed with young people being tracked by the Panel until agreed that the identified risks have been markedly reduced. The Panel will ensure that all relevant information is known by agencies supporting the child, and will consider the existing plans for reducing risk, making recommendations for additional actions where gaps are identified. The Panel also maps emerging themes and risks to inform service development.
15. In addition to this senior level panel, additional individual child level multi-agency meetings have been introduced, chaired by independent chairs, for young people at highest risk.

16. All relevant agencies have been involved in these developments and been provided with guidance in terms of what to look for, who to seek advice from and when to refer to children's services. Furthermore detailed guidance and training are currently in development. The police, children's social care and the youth justice service in particular have worked very closely together to identify those most at risk for consideration through the processes described above.
17. The establishment of a temporary 0.5 fte Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation Coordinator was approved by Committee in May 2019 with the post appointed to for a 12 month period from October 2019. Although relatively early days, the post has enabled a much improved coordination of panel activity, focusing at present on enabling effective information sharing into and out from the Panel to improve its connectivity to case holders and so increase its overall effectiveness. A data set is currently in development to assist in judging the effectiveness of the panel.
18. Criminal exploitation involves exploitative situations where a young person receives something (e.g. food, accommodation, alcohol, drugs, affection, gifts, money) in return for them completing a task of a criminal nature on behalf of another individual or group. County Lines is one example of criminal exploitation. County Lines is the process by which young people are groomed by adults and exploited to traffic class A drugs between counties, often from urban to rural areas. The 'line' refers to a dedicated mobile phone line used in this process. Nottinghamshire is acutely aware of the threat from County Lines and is working closely with the police to understand and intervene to disrupt such activity. The police are developing their resources in this area and have established a specific County Lines team that is expected to be fully operational by January 2020. Intelligence is gathered at a county and regional level and linked to this the police have developed a 'vulnerability tracker' containing the names of young people at risk due to county lines. These young people are included as part of the cohort considered by the serious youth violence and criminal exploitation panel.
19. Early intervention work with schools is being supported through the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team (TECT). Youth Justice Locality teams continue to provide a programme of one to one crime prevention support tailored to the needs of the young person at risk of or becoming embroiled in youth violence and criminal exploitation, in addition to the work of the youth service described above.
20. Work with colleagues in the district and borough councils is underway to further improve our place based approach to these threats. This is aimed at coordinating these county level services alongside district based services to improve their combined effectiveness. For example, particular sites (e.g. a park or housing development) may be recognised as a hotspot for violence or exploitation. These risks can be reduced by an intervention at both an individual, group and 'place' level by all those with relevant roles.
21. The Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in the County in October 2019 considered the response to exploitation including criminal exploitation. The report was very positive about the structures in place to address exploitation and the positive impact where used well and consistently. There is a recognition of further work needed and this will be a focus for work over the coming year.

Other Options Considered

22. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

23. The Nottinghamshire Knife Crime Strategy 2018 aligns with the priorities of the Council. In particular in its application to working with children and young people the Strategy aligns with the Nottinghamshire Youth Justice Plan for 2017-2019 and with commitments in the Council Plan for 2017-21.
24. On 10 October 2019, Nottinghamshire County Council members unanimously agreed that work relating to Child Criminal Exploitation would be reported directly to Policy Committee at regular intervals and consider if the Council should take any further strategic action

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

26. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires the local authority with its partners to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people and to deliver an effective local youth justice system.

Financial Implications

27. In May 2019 Committee approved a number of new posts to support the work of the Council to increase its provision to tackle youth violence, however at that time the source of funding had not been fully identified. There was an agreement in principle to draw on Public Health reserves and up to £150,000 from contingency. Following this a successful application for grant funding from the Early Intervention Fund via the OPCC was made and the Local Authority received £127,000 to fund the posts in 2019-20. The receipt of this income offset the requirement to draw from Public Health Reserves and contingency funds.
28. To continue this work in 2020-21 the cost of the new posts and associated running costs will be approximately £265,000 funded by an agreed contribution from Public Health Reserves of £165,000 and a contingency allocation of up to £100,000 will be required. These will be subject to appropriate approval.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) seeks funding of up to £100,000 from contingency subject to the availability of external finding.
- 2) agrees to receive an update report in nine months' time.

Councillor Philip Owen
Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee

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Constitutional Comments (EP 03/02/20)

29. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider and approve the content of the report and the recommendations.

Financial Comments (SAS 03/02/20)

30. To continue this work in 2020-21 the cost of the new posts and associated running costs will be approximately £265,000 funded by an agreed contribution from Public Health Reserves of £165,000 and a contingency allocation required of up to £100,000. These will be subject to appropriate approval.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Nottinghamshire's Knife Crime Strategy 2018 – report to Policy Committee on 22nd May 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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