

<b>2 July 2020</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Gang Related Violence Update Report</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> N/A	
<b>Report of:</b> Michelle Cunningham, Community Safety Partnership Manager and Jason Read, Youth Offending Operations Manager		
<b>Accountable Strategic Lead:</b> Cheryl Wells, Strategic Lead – Community Safety, Emergency Planning & Resilience		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Julie Rogers, Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

### **Executive Summary**

This report outlines how Thurrock's Community Safety Partnership (TCSP) through its partners, in particular, Thurrock Council, Essex Police and Youth Offending Service, are addressing the issues of Gang Related Violence in Thurrock.

Gang violence has a significant impact on communities as well as the lives of the young people and their families that become involved. Solving gangs and the associated use of offensive weapons and criminal exploitation requires a long term strategy and a sustained approach, not a short term response; we therefore welcome the annual report of the Director of Public Health on Youth Violence and Vulnerability, as it has been recognised that a Public Health approach to violence will bring together all relevant agencies to support young people and intervene before they are groomed by gangs and go on to commit offences, and will provide a long lasting solution.

Thurrock are pleased to be part of the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Board which recognises the significant impact that serious violence associated with gang activity is having on the communities of Essex. This has brought access to considerable additional funding for early prevention and intervention activity.

The TCSP remains committed to working in strong partnership through Essex Police, Youth Offending Service, Probation Services, Education, Housing and Children's Social Care to work together to prevent and disrupt gang activity. Operation Raptor is the Essex Police response to tackling gang related violence through an approach to disrupt and prevent organised drug distribution and this report highlights some of the team successes.

No single agency will resolve this issue on their own, whilst the Police are accountable for addressing the criminal element associated with gangs, through effective law enforcement the involvement of our communities is key. We need their support to take responsibility for reporting to ensure that we are able to take swift and robust action and to safeguard young people and the vulnerable from exploitation.

The value of illicit drugs and the changing drugs market continues to be the principal driver of serious violence in communities across Essex and we welcome the Drugs Market Profile for Southend, Essex and Thurrock recently published by Essex Police. This will provide a more accurate and clear understanding of local demand and dependency levels and thus the size and nature of that demand and the consequent threats to users, victims of crimes committed to fund dependence, and to those caught up in the associated violence and exploitation.

There is an ever changing landscape with regard to gangs, whilst the injunctions in place on C17 gang have disrupted their activity this has led to the identification of and subsequent enforcement action against gangs operating in Thurrock, as well as the supply through County Lines.

Members and the community have a significant role to play in reducing Gang Related Violence through ongoing reporting, in particular in relation to drug dealing and the possession of weapons and risk to vulnerable adults of exploitation, even if anonymously via Crimestoppers.

This report provides an update on proactive activity and enforcement, along with our approach to early prevention and intervention.

COVID 19 is, and will continue, to have an impact on gang related violence and we need to be prepared to respond appropriately. From changes to the supply of drugs, methods of dealing and risk to opening up areas to new supply lines. We are adapting and flexing services to both manage offenders and support those in drug treatment. Our ability to continue to raise awareness with professionals and deliver interventions and advice to young people needs to be further developed to gain maximum reach.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

### **1.1 Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to:**

- a) Note the challenges that the National issue of Gang Related Violence brings to Thurrock and support the partnership approach to combat the related increase in violent crime**
- b) Encourage the engagement of our local communities to work with us to find a resolution to this epidemic**
- c) Recognise the need to work in partnership with the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Board**

## 2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an oversight of gang activity in Thurrock and the work undertaken and planned by the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership to address gang related violence.

### 2.2 Definitions:

The Home Office define a **Gang** as being:

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

- See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group;
- Engage in criminal activity and violence; *And may also:*
- Lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical, but can include an illegal economy territory);
- Have some form of identifying structural feature; and/or
- Be in conflict with other, similar groups

2.2.1 **County lines**, as described by the Home Office, is the term used to describe gang and organised crime networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas within the Country through a dedicated mobile phone line. County line enterprises almost always involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, be they children or adults, and is always a safeguarding issue.

2.2.2 **Child Criminal Exploitation** is common in County lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

2.2.3 **Cuckooing** is the term used when **Gangs or a County Line** target **vulnerable members** of the community and is synonymous with persons from out of the area taking over a premises for free to give them a base within a community with which to supply drugs

2.2.4 **Contextual Safeguarding** is an **approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm** beyond their families. It recognises the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online, which can feature violence and abuse.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.chscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20181101-Contextual-Safeguarding-Presentation-Web...](http://www.chscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20181101-Contextual-Safeguarding-Presentation-Web...)

## 2.3 National Picture:

- 2.3.1 In July 2019, the then Home Secretary, announced a new legal duty on public bodies to prevent and tackle serious violence.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.3.2 The new 'public health duty' covers the police, local councils, local health bodies such as NHS Trusts, education representatives and youth offending services. It will ensure that relevant services work together to share data, intelligence and knowledge to understand and address the root causes of serious violence including knife crime. It also allows them to target their interventions to prevent and stop violence altogether.
- 2.3.3 In addition, the Government will amend the Crime and Disorder Act to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships, which include local police, fire and probation services, by making sure they have a strategy in place to tackle violent crime.
- 2.3.4 According to the Office of National Statistics knife crime in England and Wales has continued to increase. Figures<sup>3</sup> for the year ending December 2019 showed a 7% rise in offences involving knives or sharp instruments recorded by the police in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police) in the last year (to 45,627).<sup>1</sup> This was 49% higher than when comparable recording began (year ending March 2011) and the highest on record.

## 2.4 Essex Response:

- 2.4.1 The Police and Crime Plan prioritises reversing the trend in serious violence, tackling gangs and organised crime, and protecting children and vulnerable people from harm and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex has created a framework that will collectively help to shape the strategic approach to this problem.
- 2.4.2 This Violence and Vulnerability Framework acts as a guide for all organisations that are proactively taking action to reduce the threat of violence across Essex to have a more coordinated approach for any future working.

The Framework aims to:

- Improve visibility and awareness of partnership activity around violence and vulnerability
- Increase the occurrence and effectiveness of prevention and intervention activities
- Identify opportunities to add value to existing and planned activities
- Identify gaps in current and planned activities

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-public-health-duty-to-tackle-serious-violence>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingdecember2019#knife-or-sharp-instrument-offences>

- Highlight areas where cross-border and partnership working to be beneficial

2.4.3 For the second year the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Essex has been successful in a grant bid to the Home Office. The fund available to Essex is £1.1m. Thurrock are co-signatories to this and the application was the result of a wide range of work with partners across the County and based on the priorities agreed by the V&V Strategic Executive Group.

2.4.4 Given the emerging position of Covid-19 as the application was being developed, the content around the proposals was kept at a high level, with further work to be undertaken during quarter one of 2020/21. Final written confirmation that the application has been approved is waited, though the VRU have been informed verbally by the Home Office that it has been successful.

2.4.5 Working with identified leads, detailed work programmes around the following priority areas are being developed:

- Universal and Early Prevention
- Targeted Locations
- Workforce Development (including trauma informed training)
- Better Understanding of (includes provision and data analysis)
- Small Number Creating Greatest Harm
- “Voice of Communities”

## 2.5 Aims and Objectives in Thurrock:

2.5.1 Whilst Thurrock is a Unitary Authority and the Community Safety Partnership has its own local Gang Related Violence Strategic Group, which is accountable for delivering our strategy and action plan locally, we recognise that we need to ensure that we work closely with our Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, Health and Well Being Board and Safeguarding Adults Board as well as across Essex through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit.

2.5.2 We have aligned our local Strategic Objectives to the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Framework.

2.5.3 Our action plan will deliver on the following within Priority 2 of the CSP for 2020/21: **Tackling Violence and Vulnerability**

- Tackle Violence with and without injury
- Tackle gang related activity and offensive weapons (this will indirectly support addressing the crimes of Personal Robbery and Trafficking of Drugs which were identified in our annual strategic assessment)

### Strategic Objectives:

1. Structure and Approach: all partnerships are fully briefed and resources and protocols are in place.

2. Data Sharing and partnership working: all partners are sharing data appropriately and briefed on current issues.
3. Training: Awareness raising with professionals.
4. Early Intervention and Prevention: community engagement and awareness; education.
5. Enforcement : disruption of criminal behaviour.

## 2.6 Operational Management of Thurrock's Offenders

2.6.1 Thurrock has an Operational Gang Related Violence Group, which meets monthly for the purpose of sharing intelligence, monitoring gang nominals and ensuring that appropriate actions are in place to address their offending.

2.6.2 During 2019/20 the group has managed 66 cases of which 25 were highlighted as Red i.e. high risk. The following outcomes were seen in the year 2019/20:

- 21 re-offended which is 32% of the cohort. This is below the national average for re-offending by generic adult and juvenile offenders, which considering the high risk most of these offenders present is positive
- 62% of re-offending was in relation to offensive weapons and possession with intent to supply
- 31 nominals underwent gang intervention, knife prevention programmes, intervention from a GRV partner or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party commissioned by the CSP (St Giles trust)
- 5 nominals are recorded as having exited gangs, however it is difficult to evidence this on a long term basis
- Restrictions placed on nominals include:
  - 13 curfews
  - 17 exclusions from specific areas following community and custodial sentences, bail conditions, injunctions or Criminal Behaviour Orders
  - 19 non-contact orders in relation to other gang members
  - 14 restrictions regards mobile phones and social media
  - 1 warning and disruption order issued
- 15 convictions obtained
- 3 Criminal Behaviour Orders obtained
- 11 have transferred out of the area, and
- 9 gang injunctions have continued to be supervised

## 2.7 Operation Raptor: Essex Police

- 2.7.1 Operation Raptor is the Essex Police response to tackling gang related violence and the team for Thurrock consists of 1 Sergeant and 4 Officers. From April 2020 a Safeguarding Officer is also aligned to this team.
- 2.7.2 They conducted a 12 month review on the activities of the Thurrock based gang C17 to assess the impact of the Gang Injunctions, Community Protection Warnings and Community Protection Notices within the exclusion zones, since they first began to be imposed on the 16/09/2018 and 10/01/2019 respectively.
- 2.7.3 The review covers 16/09/2018 to 16/09/2019 and looked at ASB Incidents, Drug Offences, Drug Related Incidents and Violent Offences (Excluding Domestic) within the exclusion zones of Grays (High Street, Train Station, Grays Park, Seabrooke Rise and Grays Beach), Lakeside (Shopping Centre and Chafford Hundred Train Station) and in areas of Ockendon and Belhus.
- 2.7.4 In the year proceeding the first Community Protection Warnings 16/09/2017 to 16/09/2019 the people named on Injunctions, Community Protection Warnings / Notices were arrested a total of 46 times. In the year after, there were a total of 42 arrests.
- 2.7.5 11 Gang Injunctions were originally obtained with 1 being rescinded at the start by Essex Police. A further Gang injunction has been rescinded at the request of Essex Police due to successful diversion of that person. A further 2 are no longer being monitored at this stage, as both are serving significant custodial sentences for drugs supply.
- 2.7.6 In the last 12 months (to end Sept 19) there have been 20 gang injunction breach hearings/trials undertaken by Operation Raptor. 6 identified members of C17 have been prosecuted in Criminal Courts in this 12-month period for offences of drugs supply, robbery, possession of knife/blades and aggravated burglary with sentences totalling 42+ years imprisonment. 2 Criminal Behaviour Orders have also been successfully obtained against those not already subject to a Gang Injunction.
- 2.7.7 Following the implementation of the injunctions in Grays and Lakeside on 25/09/2018 comparing the 12 months before the injunction with the twelve months after there was a 12% (57) decrease in ASB incidents. However there was an 18% (99 offences) increase in violent offences. Drugs incidents and investigations remained relatively static.
- 2.7.8 Ockendon and Belhus saw injunctions start on 10/01/2019. As with Grays the 12 months post injunction saw ASB incidents reduce slightly, whilst violent offences increased slightly.
- 2.7.9 The increase in violence could be due to a number of reasons from a gap in the drugs market that has been created following the successful enforcement against C17 and County Drug lines operating in the Thurrock District. Rival

Urban Street Gangs from neighbouring areas and County drug lines will look to exploit market opportunities. The increase in recording of Drug offences are also expected due to the increased focus on enforcement within these areas.

2.7.10 A robust approach to enforcement was undertaken and still continues following the implementation of the Injunctions which included High visibility and Covert patrols/Operations in the identified restricted zones and surrounding areas. The purpose of this was to effectively police the Gang Injunctions and take action for all identified breaches and criminal prosecutions.

2.7.11 A factor in the increase in reporting could also be down to an increase in community confidence in the police and local authority following our high profile enforcement action and well publicised successes.

## 2.8 County Lines

2.8.1 In conjunction with the pro-active patrols Operation Raptor also undertook complex investigations into the main County Drug lines operating within the area and took enforcement action against 4 of them which has resulted in a number of successful prosecutions and imprisonment for those operating these drug lines.

## 2.9 Summary

2.9.1 Whilst there has been some tangible action and positive outcomes, work in this areas continues. The increase in violence is of concern and whilst evidence is not yet available to confirm, could be due to a number of reasons including potentially a gap in the drugs market that has been created following the successful enforcement against C17 and County Drug lines operating in the Thurrock District. Rival urban street gangs from neighbouring areas and County drug lines will look to exploit market opportunities.

2.9.2 It is important to note that violent crime in relation to gangs has been targeted and the wider community have not been at risk. Another factor for increased statistics may be as a result of increased community confidence to report, following high profile enforcement action.

2.9.3 C17 remains a priority for the Raptor team and they are seeking to extend the injunctions.

2.9.4 The local authority funding of £70k provided to Operation Raptor from 2018 / 2020 has been paramount to the success of the enforcement of the Gang injunctions and the on-going operations to target Urban Street Gangs and County Drug lines operating in the Thurrock area.

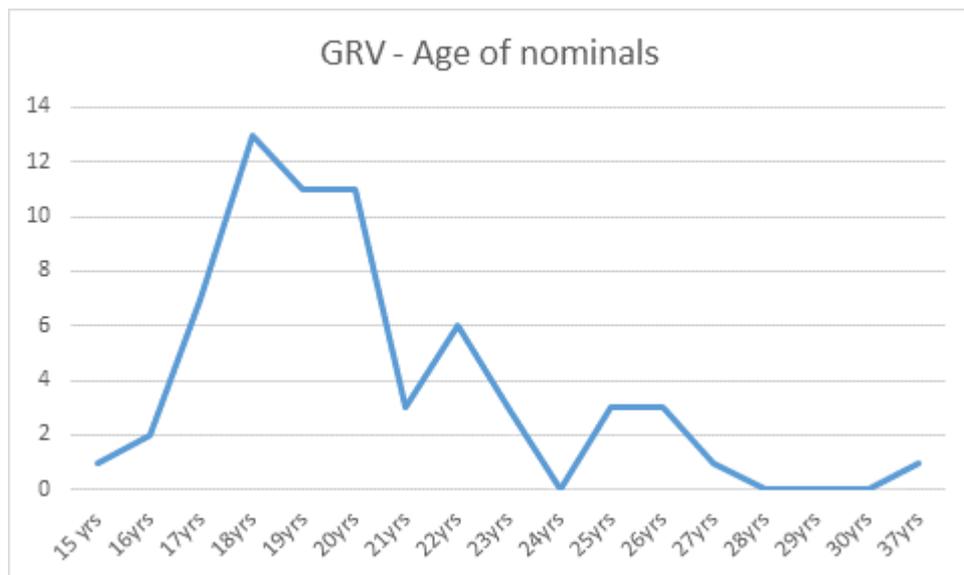
2.9.5 As well as providing an analytical product of recorded figures it is important to document the impact the enforcement has had visibly on the community and in particular the Grays High Street area.

2.9.6 The High Street and Grays Town Park are clearly in a much better position than it was prior to the injunctions being imposed with the general public, shop keepers and local authority providing positive feedback in the improved quality of life of the community frequenting the area.

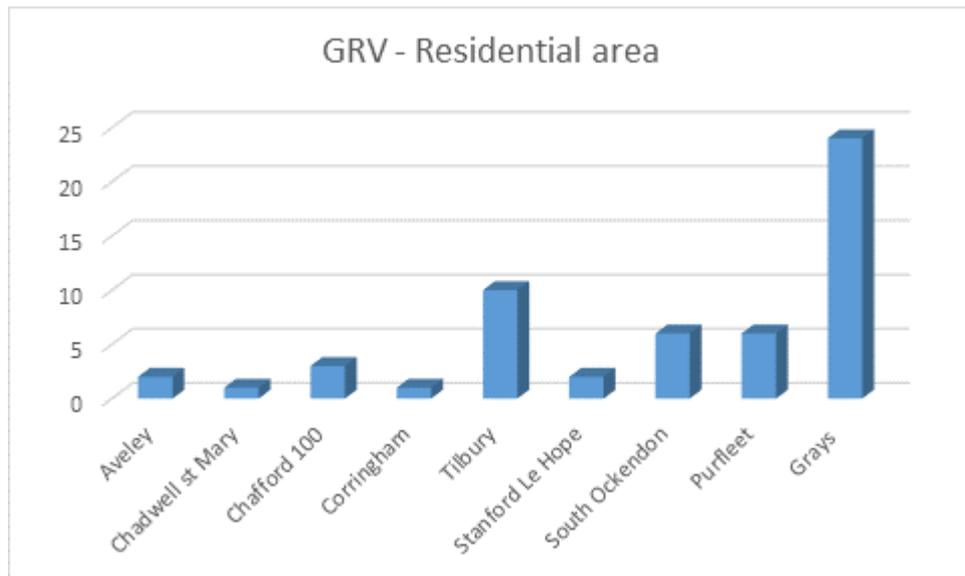
## 2.10 Gang Affiliation in Thurrock

2.10.1 The following data is taken from the report of Jason Read, Youth Offending Service Operations Manager, for 2019/20:

- We continue to see the majority of identified nominals being affiliated with Thurrock based gangs i.e. C17. However, we continue to see gang affiliates linked to London based gangs being relocated to Thurrock and aligning themselves with a Thurrock based gang. Consequently gangs like C17 will have members from various London gangs, who would not normally associate with each other in their originating borough. It is believed the purpose of this is to earn money from the existing drug trade and to be associated with the local emerging drill music scene.
- Age of nominals managed by the GRV:



- There has been a shift in gang members' home area from west of the Borough, to Grays.



## 2.11 Risk Management

2.11.1 Chaired by the Service Manager for Children Looked After there is now a weekly Risk Management Meeting, that is a multi-agency missing children meeting that reviews all of the Missing Children and young people on a weekly basis, identifying the risk of exploitation using a contextual safeguarding approach to safety planning, including disruption methods available via the Home Office Toolkit.

## 2.12 Early Intervention and Prevention: Council Funding 2019/20

2.12.1 Surplus funding has enabled the employment of a Senior Practitioner in the Youth Offending Service that works within Children's Social Care to upskill officers in supporting work with gang members and their families. This crucial role will now be absorbed within Children's Social Care and is measured against the following outcomes:

2.12.2 For the 6 months ending March 20 the senior Gang Practitioner has supported:

- 30 young people who have been exploited by gangs
- 20 of young people who are affiliated with gangs
- 6 families where member has been exposed to gangs
- 28 professionals within Childrens Social Care to develop their learning
- training sessions on Child Exploitation for Childrens Social Care

2.12.3 In addition the role has developed:

- Mapping: This is forming an intel picture of the locations and associates known to the young person and enabling pursuit of disruption techniques to provide contextualised safeguarding.

- Consultations: with social workers to gain specialist knowledge regarding young people involved in gangs or exploitation including mapping, sourcing direct work intervention worksheets, assist with joint visits, and assist with Child Exploitation (CE) Assessments and Risk Management Plans.
- Intervention Sessions: During consultations with social workers the best type of direct work for their young person is reviewed to ensure each pack is bespoke and relevant to the concerns raised.
- Parent/Carer Awareness Sessions: A parenting pack for awareness on CE and Gangs has been put together and face to face sessions have been delivered at their homes and over the phone during Covid19. Awareness for parents has also been provided through Coram. Home visits with social workers to explain CE concerns to parents and young people have also been conducted.
- Attending meetings in relation to Child Protection concerns : To support these to ensure where necessary that all parties are aware of orders available to safeguard young people available from the Home Office Disruption Toolkit such as the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).
- Assistance with Exploitation Risk Assessments and Risk Management Plans: to ensure all the relevant information is captured to provide robust safety plans and disruption techniques as well as using trauma informed language and practice.

## 2.13 Early Intervention and Prevention: PFCC Funding 2018/20

2.13.1 Through Early Intervention Funding allocated by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner in 2019/20 we have delivered programmes in Olive Academy on gangs and domestic abuse to upskill staff and raise awareness of pupils and parents. With regards to the 121 mentoring programme delivered by St Giles Trust the Headteacher of the Olive Academy said: "From the initial staff training day set up with the St Giles Trust team, we knew the project was going to have a powerful impact on our young people. The programme was intense and informative, but in a way that was engaging and included every young person at the academy. For some, it unlocked some thought-provoking, life-changing moments and for others the information they needed to keep themselves safe. The attendance of our young people increased when the St Giles Team were in school and more young people opened up to counselling opportunities. In addition, the sessions aimed at parents and other adults were well attended and allowed us to be able to initiate difficult conversations regarding the safeguarding of their children. I would fully recommend this provision for every school environment as this first-hand knowledge is critical in supporting, protecting and developing our ever-changing communities"

- We have raised awareness with in excess of 200 front line staff within the Environment and Highways Directorate
- A conference was hosted in March 2019 to upskill professionals from across a number of agencies, this included a number of speakers and focused on the issues locally

- Through the PFCC violence and vulnerability funding our youth services team have been trained to deliver mentoring programmes which commenced in 2020. They also engaged with 151 young people in holiday activities, 32 have been supported to access Ockendon youth centre junior programme and 135 young people have engaged with outreach work through the street football programme

## 2.14 Communities

- 2.14.1 Two workshops were delivered at the CVS conference in Oct 2019 to highlight local awareness in the community of the issue, how to report and discuss how communities can work with us. It was planned to roll out these workshops through CVS to 6 areas across the borough to include key community leaders (forums, members, education, youth workers etc.) unfortunately all but one was cancelled due to COVID and will be rescheduled in due course.
- 2.14.2 Challenge 25 test purchase operations with knives continue to be held. September saw 10 premises visited with a 90% pass rate, an improvement on 45% previously.

## 3. **Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

### 3.1 Issues and Threats:

- 3.1.1 COVID19 – drug users are currently reporting supply issues in relation to CLASS A drug availability. This may well lead to risks in relation to quality. At present cannabis supply has been largely unaffected. A reduction in street dealing has been seen and a change in supply methodology noted to door to door delivery. At present we haven't seen any increase in cuckooing or violence in relation to gangs but all partners remain vigilant and are monitoring closely.
- 3.1.2 Whilst communities regularly express concerns over drug dealing in their area, there is a lack of reporting through official channels, for a variety of reasons, in particular difficulty in reporting, perceived lack of action taken and fear of repercussions. CVS have planned a series of hosted workshops for the CSP to raise awareness and identify how communities can be part of the solution, crimestoppers will be part of these workshops.
- 3.1.3 From the Drug Market Profile for Essex the key issues noted are the number of active Organised Crime Gangs whose primary threat is either drugs or County lines and the number of identified active County lines hosted in Essex. Whilst the drug of choice across Essex is Cannabis Raptor officers focussing on County lines primarily seize crack cocaine and heroin. There is a risk that EU exit arrangements will likely have an impact on criminal business models including drug trafficking and supply, however the extent to which these arrangements will affect the Essex drug markets and how criminals will adapt their enterprises is currently unknown. Despite this profile report the knowledge of 'hidden' users; the volume, demographics, and impact they have on the current drug markets remains unknown.

- 3.1.4 We have flagged with the VVU that the focus on those causing the most harm in Essex often misses out our high risk young people due to their offending being outside of Essex and are working to ensure that these young people are included within Essex data and offered the same intervention opportunities.
- 3.1.5 Cuckooing continues to be a risk where vulnerable residents are being targeted due to their drug habit and/or mental health.
- 3.1.6 Grays Town Centre continues to be the focus point of concern, the introduction of Town Centre Policing teams in July 2019 is already having a positive impact in the area, and the Public Spaces Protection Order has been extended.
- 3.1.7 Increased levels of severity and complexity of violence; in particular sexual violence and abuse continue to be recorded and managed by YOS and Childrens Social Care.

## 3.2 **Actions in Place to Address**

### 3.2.1 Leadership

- 3.2.1.1 Through the Violence and Vulnerability work led by the Director of Public Health we will be supporting implementation of the recommendations from the Annual Public Health Report.
- 3.2.1.2 Strong leadership is key to ensuring that there is clear accountability and work is collaborative. Strong links are required to Children's, Youth and Educational Services.
- 3.2.1.3 All managers, through the Managers' Conference, received awareness training on Gangs and Child Sexual Exploitation. This was followed by a workshop identifying, by Directorate, the role that all teams within the Council can play in addressing Gang Related Violence.
- 3.2.1.4 Engagement with schools is key, working with the Assistant Director for Education and the Portfolio Holder a protocol (Appendix 1) has been developed and Head Teachers briefed through their forum as well as Members alongside gang awareness training. This will also be shared with School Governors but their briefing is currently on hold.
- 3.2.1.5 Thurrock's Youth Justice Plan for 2018/21 has a priority in relation to gangs, knives and child criminal exploitation.

### 3.2.2 Intelligence Gathering

- 3.2.2.1 Front line teams are encouraged to submit Intel reports to the Police, this is leading to better information from our Environment teams with regards where drug use is prevalent.

3.2.2.2 A working group has been established across Housing, Adult Social Care and Essex Police to look at developing a response to cuckooing, to ensure safeguarding of our vulnerable residents.

3.2.2.3 Contextual safeguarding meeting held regards licensed premises and further planned in relation to train stations.

### 3.2.3 Early Intervention and Prevention

3.2.3.1 Through the Violence and Vulnerability Funding we will continue to develop resources to mentor those in gangs and encourage them to seek an alternative lifestyle. As well as Essex wide resourcing of a number of projects Thurrock has received the following specific funding:

- £38k to work with those causing most harm at reachable moments.
- £19,500 to provide intervention to address cross border offending.

### 3.2.4 Communities

3.2.4.1 Working with CVS we will be hosting workshops across the Borough to raise awareness of the issue, how to report with confidence and seek solutions through those already working in the community.

3.2.4.2 We will continue to raise awareness of gangs and cuckooing through Crimestopper campaigns and support the Essex wide campaigns; launch was planned for March 20 by the Violence and Vulnerability Unit and is currently on hold. We will engage with and hear the Youth Voice, through our Youth Council. Youth Councils across Essex have received as a collective a grant of £19,500.

3.2.4.3 Every Contact Count training was due to be delivered in April, this is currently on hold but will target those working in the community who may come into contact with vulnerable young people. This training covers a range of issues in relation to exploitation.

### 3.2.5 Enforcement

3.2.5.1 Op Raptor, supported by the Local Authority and CSP will continue to enforce Gang Injunctions and operations to target urban street gangs and County drug lines operating in the Thurrock area.

3.2.5.2 The Housing ASB Team will continue to take tenancy enforcement action where appropriate including the use of closure orders of which 7 were obtained in 2019 due to some involvement in gang related violence.

### **3.3 Next Steps**

- 3.3.1 Our strategy and action plan will be reviewed in line with the recommendations from the Annual Public Health report, which this year focuses on Violence and Vulnerability as well as the findings from the Essex Drug Market Survey.
- 3.3.2 We will be creating a local Violence and Vulnerability Board, chaired by the Director of Public Health to implement these recommendations.
- 3.3.3 We will monitor the impact of COVID 19 on gangs and respond accordingly whilst promoting virtual support available to young people through our youth services and Essex Fire & Rescue Service.
- 3.3.4 We will be investing in the priorities highlighted by the VVU and appropriately funded locally.

### **3.4 The Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted:**

- Young people are at greater risk of sexual and criminal exploitation, cyber bullying and gang related violence.
- Vulnerable residents due to their drug misuse, Mental Health and Learning Disability are at risk of being “cuckooed” (i.e. taking over their property to deal/store drugs from) in relation to gang violence.
- Wards most impacted by gang related violence are Grays and Ockendon.

## **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to be reassured that a strong partnership approach is in place to combat the National challenge of an increase in violent crime and respond to this challenge locally.
- 4.2 To understand that we need to work with communities, including education establishments, to find a local solution to this issue, and recognise that this cannot be tackled in isolation, but requires the support of community leaders to engage with residents and encourage reporting.
- 4.3 To have an oversight of the work across Essex and the importance of having strong links to the Violence and Vulnerability Unit and maximise the funding opportunities available to us.

## **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 N/A

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership is central to delivering Thurrock Council's priority of:

**People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

This means:

- High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
- Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
- Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

6.2 The CSP action plan links closely to and supports delivery of Essex's Violence and Vulnerability framework (Appendix 2)

6.3 Engagement with communities to understand their concerns and the wider impact that the issue of drug related violence has on our communities and the need to reassure them that positive action is being taken to reverse the current trend in relation to violent crime

## 7. Implications

### 7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**  
**Interim Senior Management Accountant**

The Home Office through the PFCC have provided Violence and vulnerability funding for early Prevention and Intervention to the value of £0.123m. Corporate Finance will ensure the money is spent in accordance with the conditions attached. This is in addition to one-off funding made available by members from the budget surplus to support work on anti-social behaviour.

### 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**  
**Principal Lawyer / Manager – Contracts Team**

This is a gang related violence update report and there are no direct legal implications arising from the report. However the Council have an obligation to ensure the safety and protection of Thurrock residents and Legal Service is on hand to advise on any issues arising from the report as and when required.

### 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**  
**Strategic Lead: Community Development and Equalities**

Implications as outlined in 3.4 which our action plan seeks to address.

### 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder

This report will help the Council and its Partners ensure that they are delivering on its commitments to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act

### 8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Thurrock Gang Related Violence strategy 2017/20
- Thurrock Gang Related Violence action Plan revised Nov 2019
- Essex Drug Market Profile
- Gang related violence throughput data 2019/20 (Restricted report)
- C17 Review 16/9/18 – 16/9/19 (Restricted report)
- Operation Raptor quarterly briefings (Restricted report)
- Performance indicators for the Gang Related Violence Group 2019/20 (Restricted report)
- Thurrock Youth Crime Justice Plan

### 9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 - School Protocol

Appendix 2 - Safer Essex Violence and Vulnerability Framework June 2018 can be found from the following link: <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Violence-and-Vulnerability-Framework-approved-June-2018.pdf>

Appendix 3 - Gang related violence booklet

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