

Subject:	Violence, Vulnerability and Extremism		
Date of Meeting:	Monday the 19th of March 2018		
Report of:	Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the committee on the threat in relation to child criminal exploitation and gang activity related to county lines which is a police term used to describe how gangs from metropolitan areas are now operating elsewhere in the country.
- 1.2 The report outlines the strategy being adopted by the Community Safety Partnership to disrupt activity and support people to exit their involvement as victims and perpetrators.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation strategy developed by the Community Safety Partnership; and
- 2.2 That the Committee recommends to Full Council that the Council's Community Safety Strategy is updated to incorporate the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 County lines is the police term used to describe criminal activity where gangs from London and other metropolitan areas establish a base in places like Brighton and Hove and use one mobile phone number to set up a drug dealing line, they typically take over the premises of local vulnerable adults (who are often drug users) by force or coercion in a practice referred to as cuckooing.
- 3.2 The premises are then used as a base for drug dealing and in many cases young people are entrapped in child criminal exploitation. Children and young people are used to sell drugs and move drugs and money and are also exposed to child sexual exploitation and trafficking often through drug debt bonding.
- 3.3 There is evidence of this happening in Brighton and Hove.

- 3.4 The Community Safety Partnership has developed and is refining a flexible violence, vulnerability and exploitation strategy which will seek to do the following:
- Prevent vulnerable people being drawn in to organised crime relating to drugs and child criminal exploitation
 - Work with local third sector youth service providers to develop safe exit strategies and pathways for young people who are involved as victims or perpetrators
 - Work with police to take enforcement action to disrupt county lines, drug dealing and child criminal exploitation bringing offenders to justice as necessary
 - The work will be underpinned by a communications plan targeting, vulnerable and young people, communities and professionals
 - The work will be informed by data analysis and community intelligence

The Community Safety Partnership has formally adopted Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation as a Priority Area. This will ensure good partnership working between the council, the police, statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector as described above to achieve the following outcomes:

- Preventing vulnerable people from becoming involved with organised drug dealing
- Safeguarding vulnerable people who are being exploited
- Provide a safe supportive pathway to enable vulnerable people to exit involvement with organised drug dealing
- A decrease in drug exploitation related activity in the city

A copy of the Community Safety Partnership draft Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy can be found at Appendix One.

- 3.5 Progress on this work will be managed through a comprehensive action plan with a lead officer for each area accountable to the Community Safety Partnership.
- 3.6 The next significant step in Brighton and Hove will be a locality review conducted with the Violence and Vulnerability Unit from the Home Office.
- 3.7 The Locality Review is a one day process where interviews and focus groups are conducted with front line practitioners to gather information, knowledge and perception to build a qualitative picture of the key issues and drivers around county lines, gangs, youth violence and vulnerability.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 There is already a significant level of activity that is ensuring people involved in organised drug dealing are safeguarded and that organised drug dealing activity is disrupted and prosecutions are brought where necessary. There have already been in the region of twenty premises closures in the last eighteen months to protect communities from crime and anti-social behaviour related to cuckooing.
- 4.2 Bringing this existing work together, identifying gaps in provision and areas of new work informed by intelligence and analysis and best practice elsewhere in

the country is considered the best way forward by the Community Safety Partnership.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Where county lines activity results in cuckooing there will be a significant impact on the immediate neighbours and the wider neighbourhood can be impacted too. In some cases where this has happened there have been community meetings to reassure communities and to take the opportunity to encourage the reporting of incidents to inform the intelligence picture.
- 5.2 The Local Action Team Forum was briefed in January 2018 on threat posed by county lines activity. The NICE Committee received a paper on county lines activity in January 2018.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This is an emerging complex issue that stems from metropolitan areas and is becoming increasingly commonplace in towns and cities across the country where there is sufficient drugs demand.
- 6.2 A flexible responsive approach will be needed and activity locally will to be able to change and adapt quickly to tackle the issue.
- 6.3 The Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy will ensure the right partners are informed and enabled to take action as necessary the tackle the issue on a number of fronts.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 £156,000 has been allocated in the 2018/19 council budget. This will be used to fund a co-ordinator and to fund support to help people out of involvement with organised crime networks, this will include commissioning third sector youth support provision.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 1/03/18

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The Council is required to publish a Community Safety Strategy pursuant to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The strategy is one of the plans and strategies required by the Council's constitution to be approved by Full Council.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 28/02/18

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy