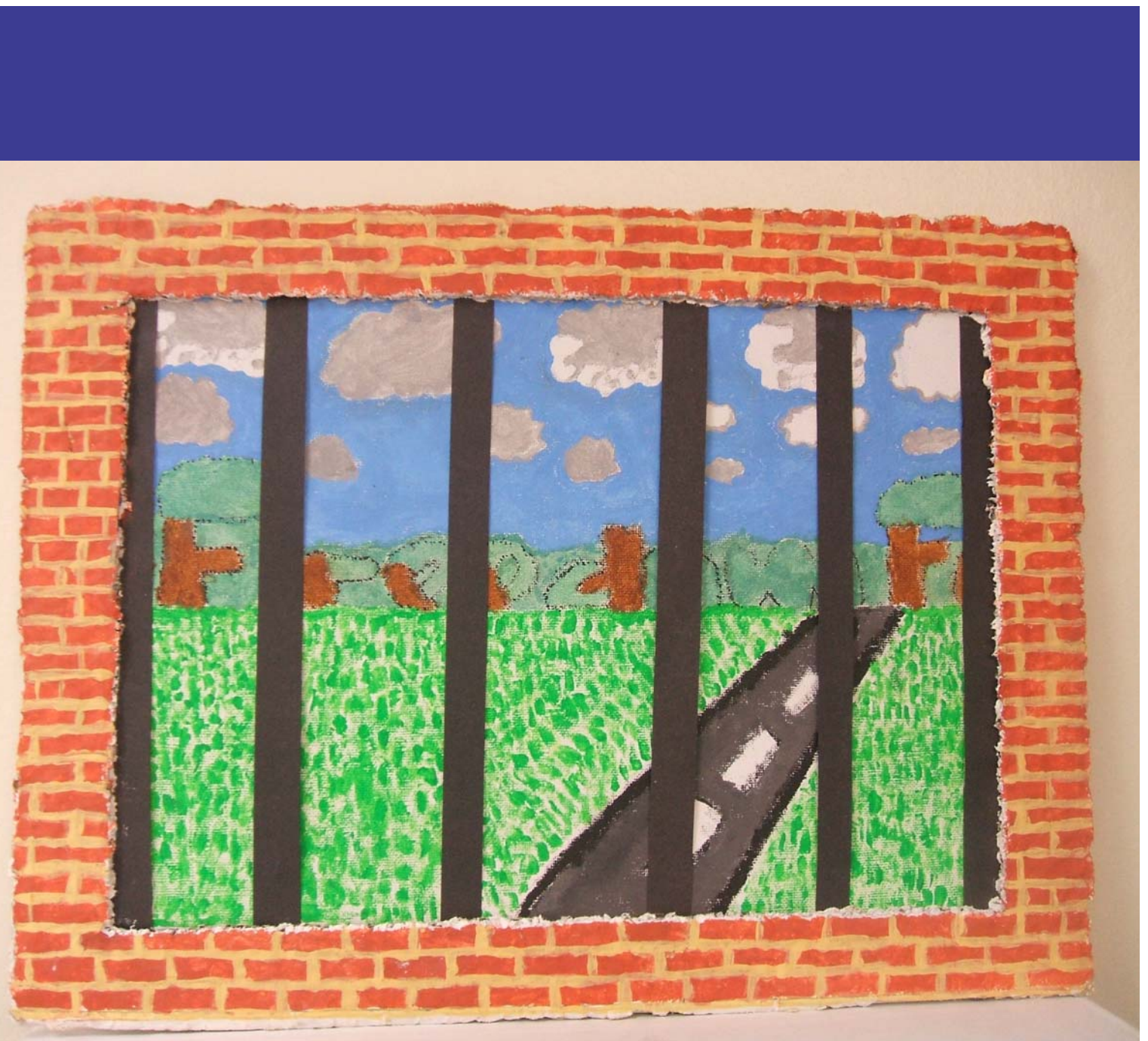


Time to Reflect

The Development of Time for Action, The Mayor's Strategy to
Tackle Serious Youth Violence

March 2012



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**Greater London Authority
March 2012**

Published by
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA
www.london.gov.uk

enquiries 020 7983 4100
minicom 020 7983 4458

ISBN 978-1-84781-512-5

Cover image courtesy of the Art Department, HMYOI Feltham

This publication is printed on recycled paper

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Foreword



In response to the alarming escalation of youth violence, the Mayor launched his Time for Action strategy in November 2008. At that stage this panel asked for clarity over the Mayor's role and a deeper understanding of work already taking place with children and young people across

London in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that GLA resources added value to this complex area.

As full evaluation of the Mayor's strategy has not yet taken place the Panel has, over recent months, held a number of meetings in public and heard from expert witnesses, as well as Mayoral advisers and others tasked with delivering these projects. We would like to thank all those who have contributed to our deliberations. This report reflects our findings and sets out our recommendations for the future development of the programme.

We believe the Mayor needs to commission research into the underlying causes of youth violence, to aid the development of a more coherent and targeted strategy going forwards. The programmes, whilst welcome, have developed at varying speeds, success has not been uniform and there has been disquiet expressed by a majority of Panel members over process. This may be in part due to the lack of a consistent oversight for the strategy as a whole as the disparate strands of the strategy fall to different Mayoral advisers.

Youth violence is not a problem that can be solved overnight and long-term investment and cooperative work with other agencies is needed in this area. We hope the recommendations made in this report are acted upon so that future work in this area can make a real difference to the lives of our young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'J. McCartney'.

Joanne McCartney AM

Chair of the Time for Action Panel

Executive Summary

Time for Action is a set of projects aimed at reaching young people in London who may be at risk of disengagement from school or family or becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime. The Time for Action Panel welcomes the Mayor's focus on addressing some of the causes of serious youth violence by expanding young people's opportunities to participate in constructive activities and improve their life chances. It is important that the Mayor shows leadership by supporting programmes which can act to improve young people's life chances and reduce youth violence.

Final evaluation reports have not yet been produced so it is too early to make an assessment of the strategy's overall effectiveness. Some programmes have been fully worked up and are operational but others have been slow to get going. While the overall strategy has been led by the Deputy Mayor for Policing, other Mayoral Advisors have led on other projects at different times. There are many lessons to be learnt by the GLA from its work in this area as the Mayor considers further interventions or future roll out of these programmes.

In developing the programmes it is important to better understand the causes and drivers of serious youth violence and there is more the Mayor can do to commission and publish research which would support his interventions. This is vital to ensure effective programme design and targeting of resources. While we have reviewed all five projects, our focus has been on three particular areas where the Mayor has intervened and significant GLA resources have been expended: to support offender rehabilitation; to support looked after children; and to support mentoring of young black boys.

The Panel has looked in detail at the creation of the Heron unit at Feltham Young Offenders Institute which seeks to deliver intensive rehabilitation for young men who have stepped forward for a second change. Our impression of the work of the Unit has been very positive and there is now some quantitative data to suggest that the Unit may be able to improve the chances of successful rehabilitation once the young men leave. We look forward to the final evaluation report in the summer and to hearing from the Mayor whether the GLA will be offering further financial support to the unit.

The local authority is the corporate parent for looked after children but there are important strategic interventions that the Mayor can make to support such children. His work to support looked after children has shifted focus from boosting school attendance and

achievement to supporting looked after children make the transition from school to university and to help raise aspirations. His intervention has been welcome and there is more that can be done through campaigns for more foster parents and by providing support into employment through ring-fencing apprenticeships in the GLA group.

The Mayor's mentoring programme has not met its delivery targets and there are concerns amongst some Panel members about the capacity of the consortium to create sufficient numbers of successful mentoring relationships. Part of the reason why the mentoring programme is behind schedule may be due to the way the appointment of the delivery consortium was made and the subsequent problems with the winning bid's delivery partners.

1 Background

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress made with Time for Action, the Mayor's strategy to tackle serious youth violence. It builds on previous work of this Panel, in particular its response to the first draft of Time for Action.¹ The update is designed to take stock of progress with this key Mayoral objective and where appropriate learn lessons for the development of future programmes.
- 1.2 Soon after his election in 2008, the Mayor proposed that his strategy should focus on the critical moments in a young person's life when things can go wrong: early years, the transition to secondary school, the entry to the job market and when young people are incarcerated. A proposed project budget was set out in December 2009 with expenditure totalling an estimated £981,000 projected for the following three years.²
- 1.3 The Mayor's strategy proposed five core programmes:
 - Project Daedalus: supporting young people who are in custody for the first time;
 - Project Brodie: keeping young people in education;
 - Mayor's Scholars: London Academies, apprentices and support for looked after children;
 - Project Titan: developing character and responsibility; and
 - Project Oracle: establishing and disseminating what works best.
- 1.4 Since publication of the strategy, the five programmes have evolved at different speeds. Some programmes have been fully worked up and are operational but others have been slow to get going. Programme delivery has been disrupted by the abolition of the London Development Agency (LDA) which caused a reassessment of funding priorities and changes in lines of accountability at the Greater London Authority (GLA). While the overall strategy has been led by the Deputy Mayor for Policing, other Mayoral Advisors lead on mentoring, on the expansion of uniformed youth activities and on providing support for looked after children. The projects have evolved in a fragmented way which has led to slowness and mixed messages about what they are seeking to achieve. This process may in the long run deliver better outcomes but it has led to delays in implementation.

¹ <http://www.london.gov.uk/archive/assembly/reports/children/time-for-action-response.pdf>

² Mayoral Decision MD 454

- 1.5 With the creation of the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPC) there will be further organisational changes. The criminal justice focused programmes (mainly Project Daedalus) have transferred over to the MOPC, while the youth engagement activities remain with the GLA. This will present challenges to the Mayorality in terms of its narrative about the nature and scope of its intervention: in particular are programmes being designed solely to prevent crime or instead to enhance life chances for particularly vulnerable young people, with the added benefit of turning them away from criminal activity? Clarity over this issue will help decide who should lead the programmes and who the right partners will be.
- 1.6 For this update, the Panel has reviewed all of the five main programmes. We set out how the programmes have changed since the launch of the first draft of the Strategy in November 2008 and our assessment of progress to date.

2 Project Daedalus

2.1 The main objective of Project Daedalus (PD) is to offer targeted positive opportunities, and a more constructive environment for young first-time offenders in custody to reduce re-offending, support resettlement, and to increase employment rates on release. Central to the programme is the creation of the Heron Unit at Feltham Young Offender Institute (YOI).

2.2 The original specification included the following:

- A separate wing at Feltham YOI – the Heron unit, operational from September 2009 to accommodate young people from six London boroughs, but now rolled out across London – funded by the Youth Justice Board.
- Six additional Feltham staff to be allocated to the Heron unit: making greater use of time and additional, targeted resources to improve the quality of training for young offenders – funded by the Youth Justice Board and the Ministry of Justice.
- Two non-uniformed staff in the unit, funded originally by the LDA, to provide intensive support for young people in preparation of their release.
- Creation of the new role of “resettlement broker”, funded originally by the LDA. Additional staff, dedicated to working with young people and existing agencies to ensure that those leaving custody have jobs, training and homes to go to.
- An effective multi-disciplinary triage system: allowing prison staff to identify and assess young people for their suitability for the Heron unit within their first 24-48 hours in Feltham.

Panel assessment: Young people in custody at the Heron unit, Feltham YOI

2.3 The establishment of the Heron unit has enabled targeted resources to be directed to young offenders to improve their opportunities beyond custody. Up to April 2011, there had been 181 programme starts of which 144 have been released into the community. Anecdotal feedback on this approach from offenders, prison and resettlement staff, and the fact that it has been expanded to all offenders not just first time offenders, indicates that this approach has proved popular. Members of the Panel who visited Feltham YOI were impressed with the energy, professionalism and commitment of all the staff involved in running and managing the Heron unit.

Controversy over re-offending rates

- 2.4 In oral evidence to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee on 6 September 2011, the Mayor stated that “We cut reoffending rates in that wing from 80 per cent to 19 per cent.” These figures were challenged by Sir Michael Scholar, Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, who raised concerns about this claim. In a letter to the Chairman of the Home Affairs Committee, he stated that “the Mayor’s evidence to your Committee is not supported by the Ministry of Justice’s (MOJ) published statistics; nor is it supported by any statistical analysis published by the Mayor’s Office.”
- 2.5 To clarify the situation the Mayor wrote to the Home Affairs Committee stating “On the question of measuring the reoffending rate after offenders leave the Heron wing, let me be absolutely clear; it is simply too soon to arrive at a final figure directly comparable to the national average. The final reconviction statistics can only be released once the full evaluation is completed next year. The interim figures for the unit calculated by the London Criminal Justice Partnership (which is independent of City Hall) suggest that the reoffending rate for the unit’s first year of operation was 19 per cent. As the Heron Unit has been operational for less than two years, at your hearing I should perhaps not have given the impression that the new unit’s original reoffending rate was around 80 per cent. I should have made it clear that I was comparing the unit’s 19 per cent figure with the national average for young men leaving custody, which was 77.6 per cent during the period – according to MOJ data.”³
- 2.6 A preliminary findings report evaluating Project Daedalus was published in March 2012, with a final evaluation report expected in the summer.⁴ The preliminary findings report sets out early evaluation data on getting young people from the Heron unit back into education, training and employment (ETE) and on reducing re-offending rates. The project was evaluated using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, including analysis of case management and performance data and interviews with stakeholders, staff and young people on or previously on the Heron unit. The report notes how the provision of multiple modules and workshops and the extra staff deployed has both improved behaviour of the young men in the Heron

³ See http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/the-london-assembly/assembly_investigation/Time-for-Action

⁴

[http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/RESTRICTED%20Ipsos%20MORI_Preliminary%20Thematic%20Findings%20Report%2029-2-12%20\(3\)%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/RESTRICTED%20Ipsos%20MORI_Preliminary%20Thematic%20Findings%20Report%2029-2-12%20(3)%20(2).pdf)

unit and boosted their willingness to re-engage with positive activities when they leave, particularly education.⁵

- 2.7 Data in the findings report show that as of January 2012 of the 222 young people discharged from the Heron unit, 54.1 per cent have entered ETE, with 32.1 per cent of young people having sustained ETE for 6 months.⁶ The report notes that “the general feeling [among stakeholders] was that the performance against outcomes had been improving...[but that] outcomes around sustained ETE were not meeting the agreed targets, and that this was a concern”.⁷ In explanatory text some stakeholders questioned whether these “were in fact the right targets to have in first place”, with particular concern as to whether it was realistic to assume “that young people, often with multiple and complex needs, could enter employment on release from custody and sustain this engagement for up to 6 months”.⁸ The declining job market was, furthermore, limiting the availability of suitable jobs.
- 2.8 The preliminary findings report sets out data on proven re-offending, which has been peer reviewed by the MoJ. The analysis is based on a small sub-sample of all young people released from the Heron unit, but because not enough time has passed to conduct a full re-offending analysis the data presented covers releases from the Heron unit in the 12-months from 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and followed up for nine months; this gives a cohort of 63 young people.⁹ Out of the 63 people discharged from the Heron unit, 26 re-offended in nine months following release giving a re-offending rate of 41 per cent. A broad brush comparison can be made to national level re-offending statistics adjusted to the nine month follow-up period. Analysis for 2009 based on all 15 to 17 year olds released from the juvenile secure estate showed that of the 1,846 young people

⁵ Between February 2011 and January 2012 there were 28 recorded incidents of Restrictive Physical Interventions on the Heron Unit, compared to 47 incidents on a comparable Unit at Feltham over the same period.

⁶ Based on all entries into ETE from September 2009 to July 2011

⁷ Evaluation of the London Youth Reducing Reoffending Programme (Daedalus), February 2012, p9

⁸ Op.cit. p9

⁹ A nine month follow-up period is not in line with the standard MoJ 12-month period. A shorter follow-up period allows less time to re-offend so slightly lower levels of re-offending should be expected. In particular, this is likely to underestimate the number of serious offences which can take longer to be sentenced at court.

discharged 61 per cent re-offended.¹⁰ It is important to note that the national statistics are based on a much larger number of young people and that the characteristics of these offenders, including their motivation to change their re-offending behaviour are likely to be different from those in the Heron unit. It is also the case that some of the boys who have gone into Heron were removed because they have “not shown the right motivation and application”.¹¹ The report further notes that “these early findings should be treated with caution as sufficient time has not passed to conduct a full re-offending analysis, which meets MoJ standards...and the lack of an adequately matched control group mean that no firm conclusions can be drawn.”¹²

Future prospects

- 2.9 Future funding for resettlement-type services are generally being reduced (for example through Youth Offending Teams and in the number of police officers assigned to the Diamond Initiative – set up to rehabilitate serial offenders).¹³ The future of the Heron unit is subject to approval by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and the Ministry of Justice. Currently the YJB is in the process of developing a new strategy for the youth secure estate, which will include a separate report on the Heron unit. The YJB have committed to funding the Heron unit until September 2012.
- 2.10 The Panel welcomes the IpspsMORI preliminary findings report and we look forward to the publication of the final report in the summer as this will allow conclusions to be drawn about the cost-effectiveness of different interventions to reduce re-offending and provide robust costings per participant.
- 2.11 There are a number of positive aspects to the way Project Daedalus has been managed. It has had success in leveraging in funding from other sources, including European, central government and local authority funds. Furthermore, the GLA aims to lobby central government for a share of cost savings if evaluation demonstrates savings in other budgets (health and/or criminal justice service, for example). And now that the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime is established, the Mayor may have access to existing YJB and Regional

¹⁰ For further details on the comparison of the Heron re-offending data with national data see op.cit. p13.

¹¹ Transcript Time for Action Panel (TfAP)16 March 2011, Kit Malthouse AM, Deputy Mayor for Policing p7

¹² Op.cit. p13

¹³ Transcript TfAP 16 March 2011, Kit Malthouse AM, Deputy Mayor for Policing p 9

Offender Management budgets which would provide opportunities for developing further a holistic approach to supporting those leaving custody.¹⁴

- 2.12 While the Panel is supportive of the initiative, statements by the Mayor that present a premature overview of the effectiveness of the Heron unit, based on anecdotal evidence, risk throwing doubt on the credibility of the whole project. Furthermore, it remains unclear how the Mayor will support the Heron unit after May 2012. In a recent press release the Mayor committed £3.5m from a £10m European Social Fund match funded grant to support young people who have been in remand or sentenced to custody and support them through the transition from release to ETE. The press release stated that “the Mayor, working with the YJB and London Prisons, has taken the next step with securing investment for resettlement of young offenders until 2015”, but no further details are available on how those services are to be delivered until the grants have been awarded.¹⁵
- 2.13 The debate over the future of Project Daedalus could prove to be an important milestone in work on rehabilitating young men in custody. There is an opportunity for relevant stakeholders to contribute to the debate and for new partnerships to be forged to support such work going forward. Ultimately it is Government and not the Mayor who will decide the future for this project and it is worth noting that in the new Young Offenders Institution in Thamesmead there appears to be no plans for a similar facility.

Recommendation 1

The Mayor to bring to the Assembly at the earliest opportunity the final evaluation of Project Daedalus and set out his thinking about a future funding strategy for the Heron unit.

¹⁴ Transcript TfAP 16 March 2011, Kit Malthouse, Deputy Mayor for Policing p 10

¹⁵ http://www.london.gov.uk/media/press_releases_mayoral/mayor-pumps-%C2%A335m-cutting-youth-re-offending-%E2%80%98pioneering%E2%80%99-prison-project-delivers-promising-

3 Project Brodie

- 3.1 The objective of Project Brodie is to maximise young people's attendance at educational institutions in order to improve academic attainment and employment opportunities, and to reduce the likelihood of outcomes related to crime and violence. The project sought to focus on the reasons for absence from school (eg. bullying, mental health, parental substance misuse) and to channel support for young people from appropriate agencies. Its other ambitions include:
- Promoting young people's positive engagement with schools, through working with boroughs and schools;
 - Promoting the use of best practice in attendance management systems for schools to use with parents; and
 - Providing support for truancy patrols and for police to work closely with borough children's services, educational establishments and other partners to prioritise truancy.
- 3.2 Originally led by London Councils, the project's leadership role was then held by the Deputy Mayor for Policing, who told the Time for Action Panel that the Mayor's role was to influence stakeholders, bringing together local authorities, schools and the police.¹⁶ Project Brodie has 'migrated' into three main areas:¹⁷
- Safer Learners (safety at school);
 - Advocacy in Pupil Referral Units – attendance and exclusion; and
 - Different methods of approaching truancy and absenteeism.
- 3.3 In our discussions with the Deputy Mayor for Policing it has become clear that Project Brodie has faced challenges due to its overlap with borough responsibilities, particularly in tackling truancy. Work to date has concentrated on improving the knowledge base about absence and under-achievement over delivering specific interventions for young people.

Panel assessment: Project Brodie

- 3.4 Project Brodie has made progress in understanding the causes behind school absence and what works in tackling it, by commissioning research on the role of the court system and enforcement measures on attendance. While a small amount of project delivery is taking place through funding parent advocacy in five boroughs, further work is needed in introducing the other deliverables, such as intensive support

¹⁶ Transcript TfA Panel, 16 March 2011, p. 15

¹⁷ Transcript TfA Panel, 16 March 2011, p. 11-12

for vulnerable pre-teens and attendance management technologies in schools.

Future prospects

- 3.5 The Panel has been unable to assess whether this project is on track to meet its original objectives. Project Brodie's responsibilities overlap with local authority work. Therefore it is difficult to separate the project from general borough activity in order to assess individual project's impact. The limited amount of project delivery directly influencing young people means it is difficult to know whether Project Brodie has been effective in improving academic attainment or employment opportunities.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor's Inquiry into Education must consider the role of Project Brodie as a strategic intervention to support vulnerable children's attendance at school. The Inquiry should set out lessons learned so far and options for further Mayoral support if any.

4 Mayor's Scholars

- 4.1 The Mayor's Scholars project aims to support the raising of educational attainment for those who are most disadvantaged. There were three main strands in the original draft strategy: an ambitious programme for looked after children; boosting the numbers of academies; boosting the number of apprenticeships and support for those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Panel has looked in detail at the programme to support looked after children because of the very powerful and public commitment made by the Mayor to improve these young people's life chances.
- 4.2 The challenges for looked after children are immense; these young people have to cope with a range of instabilities in their lives; they may have to face multiple moves, sometimes to different boroughs or even outside London, they may lose touch with their siblings, they may have many different foster parents, and social workers to work with. They have to deal with the stigma of not having a stable family life. Outcomes for looked after children are relatively poor - only 29 per cent of looked after children achieve 5 GCSE grades A*-C compared to a national average of 78 per cent, and two thirds of children in care have Special Educational Needs. A very small minority of looked after children in London (6.4 per cent) were convicted, received a final warning or were reprimanded in the past 12 months, yet children in care have a higher chance of offending. Looked after children represent 40 per cent of children in custody, and 25 per cent of adult prisoners have previously been in care.
- 4.3 The Mayor's initial proposals were to help to boost school attendance and achievement for the 11,000 looked after children in the capital and, in the longer term, their employment outcomes. The Mayor also proposed to, "ensure that other relevant Mayor's programmes include a specific focus on children in care." The results of the programme so far have been more modest and further work is needed if the Mayor is to make a significant contribution to supporting looked after children. While the corporate parent for looked after children is the local authority this remains a challenge for any Mayoral intervention with the space for such intervention unclear.

Panel assessment: Mayor's Scholars

- 4.4 The first practical step the Mayor's team proposed was to look at providing some form of educational scholarship to help looked after children take advantage of opportunities in higher education. However, recent changes to government guidance has placed a responsibility on local authorities to provide this type of support, which meant the Mayor's team, alongside the partners they were intending to work with, had to re-evaluate their roles within this programme. This created the impression that the GLA has been slow to respond to the challenge, and the Deputy Mayor for Policing conceded in early 2011 that, "I have to put my hand up to say, of all the strands, this is the one that is the furthest behind."
- 4.5 The Deputy Mayor for Policing stated that progress was disappointing because the Mayor does not have responsibilities in this area nor is there any specific funding available. He also argued that, "we have been dealing with a moving horizon in terms of local authorities and what their duties have been around looked after children over the last couple of years, which has made life a little more difficult in terms of working with them as partners."
- 4.6 Nevertheless, the Mayor has found a way to support looked after children moving from school to university by working with the Frank Buttle Trust to ensure children from this group have the opportunities and on-the-ground support to make a success of going to university. This initiative has been welcomed at borough level; Cllr Steve Reed, London Councils' Executive Member for Children's Services and Skills and Employment stated "that has been very helpful and complimentary to what the boroughs have done and has, indeed, supported many young people to go on and achieve that level of success, and that is to be welcomed."¹⁸
- 4.7 Three "Wise-up" events for looked after children have been held at City Hall and are designed to raise aspirations and promote positive pathways into higher education and employment. Furthermore the "Opportunities for Vulnerable Young People who are NEET"¹⁹ will comply with GLA specifications and will specifically target looked after children. While the prime responsibility for looked after children

¹⁸ Transcript TfAP 3 November 2011, Cllr Steve Reed, London Councils Executive member for Children's Services and Skills and Employment p 12

¹⁹ This programme is now run by the Skills Funding Agency following transfer from the LDA and has match funding from the European Social Fund.

remains with the boroughs this is an important project that supports those young people and their life chances. A clear challenge for the Mayor is to help these young people in their access to the job market through apprenticeships and other job opportunities.

- 4.8 However, progress and further evaluation is still needed in two further areas: a small scale Near Peer mentoring scheme and apprenticeships. The Near Peer mentoring project has worked with a total of just over 40 mentees and mentors in Hackney, Islington and Kensington and Chelsea and is designed to raise aspirations through the provision of extra-curricular educational and life skills support in looked after children aged 10-14 years.
- 4.9 The published Near Peer Mentoring Project Final Report sought to provide a quantitative assessment of the project's effectiveness, but was based on very small numbers of participants, many of whom did not complete the baseline evaluation. This made it difficult to produce a robust assessment of the distance travelled between the baseline and project completion. The report is complimentary of the project stating that it is "a valuable project that has demonstrated great potential to have significant impact in the lives of young people in foster care."²⁰ Nevertheless some Panel members were concerned that to date it was difficult to identify tangible outcomes from the project.
- 4.10 The evaluation report highlights a number of issues where lessons can be learnt and which must be addressed as similar schemes are replicated by the GLA across London. For example, some mentoring meetings took place in group settings which is unusual as, typically, mentoring schemes work better where there are 1 to 1 meetings between mentors and mentees, and this in some cases proved an initial barrier to young people participating.²¹ Furthermore, this cohort of young people being worked with can have many issues and needs to address before they are in a position to engage successfully with a programme like this.
- 4.11 The cost per mentee was high: £2500 compared to a mentoring scheme delivered through schools costing approximately £800 per participant. However, the evaluation report notes comparative costs should be viewed in the context of the amount of time programmes have run, and the nature of the target group, which affect the

²⁰ EARN, Near Peer Mentoring Project Final Report, p23

²¹ EARN, Near Peer Mentoring Project Final Report, p20

resource needed to deliver mentoring schemes. The GLA remains supportive of this programme and the objective is to expand the project with new grants to Hackney, Islington and K&C and to four South East London boroughs in the 2011/12 academic year (worth up to £220,000).²²

Recommendation 3

A full evaluation of all the Near-Peer mentoring programmes should be undertaken and published before any further roll-out can be considered.

- 4.12 The Mayor has made efforts to encourage the use of apprenticeships across London's workforce. He has an ambitious target of achieving 3,000 apprenticeships across the GLA group over three years. At present GLA group apprenticeships are not ring-fenced for looked after children but the Deputy Mayor for Policing has now committed to ensuring that from the next recruitment intake in September 2011 the opportunities will be directly marketed to young people in care.²³

Recommendation 4

The Mayor to commit to ring-fence a proportion of GLA group apprenticeships for looked after children.

Future prospects

- 4.13 Obtaining financial support for any new work in this area may be difficult as local authority resources become increasingly stretched. There is a need for the GLA to review what further support it can offer looked after children at a strategic level. The Assembly's Health and Public Services Committee discussed the role of the Mayor in supporting looked after children with a range of experts at its February meeting. There was broad support for the Mayor to lead a campaign to boost the number of foster carers in the capital as well as support for schemes which supported young people moving out of care and into a new home and work environment.²⁴

²² See Director's Decision Form 522

²³ Follow-up letter from Christian Steenberg to TfA Panel, April 2011

²⁴ The Assembly's Health and Public Services discussed what role the Mayor could play in supporting London's looked after children at its February 2012 meeting.

5 Project Titan

5.1 The aim of Project Titan is to encourage young Londoners, particularly those vulnerable to crime, to participate in positive disciplined activities that help build character and responsibility and mutual respect. The original commitments of the project included backing the rollout of YOU London (Youth Organisations – Uniform) in order to expand the opportunities available to young people to get involved with organisations such as the Scouts, Girl guides, and the cadets, in particular supporting the Volunteer Police Cadets and the expansion of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)/Army Cadets Pan-London Outreach Project across London’s boroughs. The first draft of the Mayor’s strategy did not include mentoring programmes.

5.2 Significant funding resource from the LDA has been deployed into this programme:

- YOU London is receiving nearly £1.4m through Time for Action. The project initially aimed to reach 2,500 vulnerable young people, but that target has now been stretched to 7,000. The Mayor aims to recruit 1,000 adult volunteers to help run these groups.
- The Metropolitan Black Police Association’s (MetBPA) VOYAGE programme is expanding and will receive £1.7m.
- The Mayor’s Young Black Men Mentoring Project will receive £1.37m

All these programmes have evaluation exercises built into their specification, which will be made available once the projects have finished.

Panel Assessment: Project Titan

5.3 While the Time for Action Panel welcomes the drive to encourage more adult volunteers to become involved in running uniformed groups, a majority of members²⁵ raised specific concerns about the selection process of the winning consortium for the mentoring programme and about the capacity of the chosen consortium to deliver the Mayor’s objectives.

The value of mentoring

5.4 For Steve Matthews (Chief Executive, Mentoring and Befriending Foundation) successful mentoring is about providing positive role models, to help develop confidence and boost aspirations in the mentee; “there are lots of benefits that have been identified through

²⁵ The Labour and Liberal Democrat members of the Panel.

research in terms of helping young people to find employment opportunities to enter into education or to re-engage in education if they have become disengaged...[However,] if you are working with young people who have offended or there are serious issues around their involvement in offending, then it is more difficult to apply the concepts of mentoring and for that to be effective.”²⁶

- 5.5 The Mayor’s Mentoring Champion, Ray Lewis, stated that mentoring “can help young men see a different perspective and it can encourage people to aim for the things they might not have otherwise done. It is more used ... as a goal model, rather than a role model – that is to say that it can give young men roles that they can aspire to, rather than being someone that I can be like ...”.
- 5.6 The Mayor’s Advisor on Social Action and Volunteering, Lizzie Noel, who leads on this project set out the value of mentoring in a submission to the Panel and stated that there is an academic body of work “to show that certain types of mentoring interventions are very effective, some more than others, and we have attempted to make sure that this mentoring programme conforms to the best features of the most effective type of intervention.”²⁷ The Panel discussed concerns that a little bit of mentoring is worse than no mentoring for raising young people’s aspirations. This concern was recognised by Lizzie Noel who stated that “what is very important is the right type of mentoring with the right type of mentors, appropriately supported, and that those mentors have a close and consistent relationship with their mentees over a period of at least 12 months”²⁸

Choosing the lead consortium

- 5.7 The Mayor’s Mentoring Programme has an ambitious set of objectives; it seeks over three years, to match trained adult volunteer mentors with at least 1,000 black boys aged 10-16. The aim is for the mentoring relationship to last for one year and for the boys to reach the end of the year without having offended, to be in education and “familiar with useful organisations, institutions and opportunities”.²⁹ The project will work across seven pre-chosen boroughs and be delivered primarily, though not exclusively, by black men.

²⁶ Transcript TfAP 21 July, Steve Matthews p3 and 4

²⁷ Transcript TfAP 3 November Lizzie Noel p44

²⁸ Op. cit.

²⁹ Request for Applications for Grant Funding, Mayor’s Mentoring Programme, GLA p7

- 5.8 The Mentoring Programme became operational in August 2011. At the November 2011 Time for Action Panel meeting, Lizzie Noel stated that though the programme was behind schedule, she was confident that by the end of the calendar year quarterly targets would have been met so that there would be a total of 180 mentoring relationships running.³⁰ At the subsequent Panel meeting in January 2012, Lizzie Noel stated that only 62 active mentoring relationships had been established, which was “very disappointing”. She argued that good progress had been made in that 170 mentees had been referred into the programme and 110 mentors had been trained. It was also welcomed that of the mentors 95 per cent were males and 88 per cent black males. For the Mayor’s Mentoring Champion this was disappointing progress “the delivery agent, the contractor, needs to up its game”.
- 5.9 Part of the reason why the mentoring programme is behind schedule may be due to the way the appointment of the delivery consortium was made and the subsequent problems with the winning bid’s delivery partners.³¹
- 5.10 A Decision Making Panel (DMP) chaired by Ron Belgrave, former Head of Community Safety (GLA), Lizzie Noel and Ray Lewis was established to sift and interview bidders and to make a recommendation to the Mayor for the award of the grant. At the end of the first interview there was no unanimous agreement on a winning bid. A second round of interviews followed two weeks later during which time the GLA Finance team undertook due diligence on the four shortlisted bids. The original DMP was supplemented with the addition of Sir Edward Lister, Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor and Helen Keenan, then Assistant Director, Health and Communities GLA. The aim of expanding the DMP was to “provide fresh insight in terms of the questions asked and answers received”.³² The second interviews ended without a decision being made and no real process established as to how the final decision would be made. Ray Lewis described this as an “unsatisfactory state”.
- 5.11 The three original members of the Decision Panel “were then asked to revise their original scores” in the light of the additional information gleaned from the second interviews. By this stage there was concern

³⁰ TfAP 3 November Lizzie Noel p22

³¹ Full details of the bidders are set out in Mayoral Decision Form (MD856)

³² Mayoral Decision Form (MD856)

among DMP members about the financial robustness of some of the bidders.³³ Three organisations had failed the financial due diligence and the University of East London (UEL) was the only lead organisation to satisfy the financial due diligence. Thus, according to the relevant Mayoral Decision Form, “given this and the fact that UEL had a strong bid [has] led a majority of the [DMP] panel to recommend that the Mayor should award the funding to UEL”.^{34 35}

- 5.12 A majority of Time for Action Panel members³⁶ have raised a number of concerns about the lack of transparency over important exchanges that took place outside of the formal DMP meetings. Our discussions with DMP members reveal that key decisions including holding a second interview and how to run it, and ultimately approving the UEL bid were taken outside of the formal interview meetings and for which there are no records. A majority of Time for Action Panel members have also raised concerns over the decision not to pursue a financial bond from the partner organisation of the highest scoring bid, which could have been used to underwrite the bid as a whole.
- 5.13 A majority of Time for Action Panel members also remain concerned about the role of the Mayor’s Mentoring Champion during the process of tendering and awarding the mentoring grant. In advance of the tender competition Ray Lewis played an active role to “warm up the market”, this was of particular concern given the lack of clarity over his declarations of interests which only went into the public domain after the bidding process was over. Concerns have also been raised as to why Ray Lewis should be on a Decision Making Panel (DMP) when it was clearly stated in his letter of engagement by the Mayor that his role as the Mayor’s Mentoring Champion “carries no decision-making or budget responsibility”.^{37 38} Then following the award of the grant to UEL he asked UEL to consider taking on a particular individual as a Programme Director, which they did. Yet this very active role belies

³³ Details of the GLA Finance team’s financial due diligence can be seen here: <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/TFA%20financial%20appraisal.pdf>

³⁴ Mayor’s Decision Form (MD856)

³⁵ The Conservative members of the Panel note that the significance of the financial due diligence was recognised. They also acknowledge that there would be a significant lack of credibility if a multi-million pound grant was awarded to a consortium which had failed a financial due diligence test when one of the short-listed consortia had passed it. This matter was of particular importance in light of the delay in commencing this process.

³⁶ Conservative members of the Panel do not support paragraphs 5.12 or 5.13.

³⁷ Letter from the Mayor to Ray Lewis, 8 September 2008

³⁸ It should be noted that the DMP did not make the final decision. The final decision on the bid still lay ultimately with the Mayor.

the confusion as to what his exact role as Mentoring Champion is. In response to questions from the Time for Action Panel as to whether it would be fair to say that he did not really know what his role was in mentoring at the moment he replied “That is not unfair”.

- 5.14 There is a need for the GLA to revisit its processes for managing the selection process for awarding significant grants. Tighter management, more transparency and clear steps for reaching the final decision would ensure better commissioning and enhance confidence in the winning bids ability to deliver.

Capacity within the winning consortium

- 5.15 The majority of members of the Time for Action Panel have raised specific concerns about whether the winning UEL consortium has the capacity to deliver the 1,000 stable mentoring relationships it is contracted to deliver over the next three years. In particular, four organisations of the original consortium are no longer involved as UEL were not able to successfully conclude negotiation of delivery arrangements with Ethos, Kiyon Prince Foundation, Robert Levy Foundation (the London Action Trust has gone into administration). This has meant that UEL has spent a lot of time establishing service level agreements with other local delivery bodies rather than getting on with establishing mentoring relationships. We are disappointed that as of the end of February there was still no delivery body active in Haringey.³⁹

³⁹ This was due to a number of factors largely outside the GLA’s control.

Future Prospects

- 5.16 The Time for Action Panel is concerned about the delay in delivery and the future capacity for the consortium to establish up to 50 high quality mentoring relationships in all of the seven boroughs in each of the next three years.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor's Advisor to provide a detailed update on progress with meeting the mentoring targets across London and an interim evaluation report before the end of August 2012.

Recommendation 6

That the Mayor clarify the future role of his Mentoring Champion

Recommendation 7

That the GLA establish that best practice is served if the decision for all significant grants should be taken at a meeting of a Decision Making Panel and not outside of it and that a formal record of all decisions taken, including dissent, are kept.

6 Project Oracle

- 6.1 The original purpose of Project Oracle was to better understand the drivers of youth violence and the underlying causes, both short and long term, and to establish “what really works” in London to address them.⁴⁰ The intention was to provide a comprehensive pan-London, multi-agency mechanism for identifying, sharing and disseminating best practice. While several important steps have been taken, the programme is not yet fully completed.
- 6.2 The Panel believes that in order to develop programmes aimed at tackling youth violence there must be a good understanding of the underlying causes, however complex. This is an area in which the GLA could add real value and which is needed in order to develop future coherent and targeted strategies. As far as we are aware there has been no comprehensive research into examining the drivers of youth violence in London which Project Oracle was set up, in part, to better comprehend. We understand that this is something that the Mayor’s Expert Advisory Panel of prominent members of the black community also called for.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should commission and publish comprehensive research into the underlying causes and drivers of youth violence in London.

- 6.3 In discussions with the Deputy Mayor for Policing, the Time for Action Panel heard how Project Oracle was delayed due to “nervousness” in local authorities and the third sector about what effect such an open display of project evaluation could have on future funders. Consequently the project shifted emphasis to become a self-assessment tool rather than one that is imposed on groups.

Panel assessment: Project Oracle

- 6.4 The Time for Action Panel welcomes the publication of the Oracle ‘Standards of Evidence’ document, which ‘sets the bar’ in terms of the evidence required of social projects and programmes aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people in London. The GLA is now running 10 pilot schemes with a variety of organisations to

⁴⁰ A vital step, according to the Mayor’s Expert Advisory Group, to help design effective intervention programmes.

test the assessment framework⁴¹. There are over 100 practitioners on the online community and Oracle will help develop learning about the value of youth violence programmes in London.

Future prospects

- 6.5 The Panel is highly supportive of the objective of Project Oracle. It does however appear that this project has been under-resourced to date and members are concerned that this may hinder its future development. It is understood that funding opportunities are being examined and the Panel urges the Mayor to ensure that future funding is secured as soon as possible.

⁴¹ TfA Panel, 16 March 2011, p29-30

7 Conclusion

7.1 Time for Action is an ambitious set of projects aimed at reaching young people in London who may be at risk of disengagement from school or family, or becoming a victim, or perpetrator of crime. The Time for Action Panel welcomes the Mayor's focus on addressing some of the causes of disengagement by expanding young people's opportunities to participate in constructive activities and improve their life chances. It is important that the Mayor shows leadership by supporting programmes which can act preventively to improve young people's chances and reduce youth violence. This is an important issue for all Londoners, and we support the Mayor using his strategic position to bring together a wide range of partners from all sectors to tackle it. Our conclusions are aimed at helping to deliver this programme of work effectively and we would welcome the Mayor's response to them.

Identifying clearly where Mayoral intervention can add value

7.2 In several of the programmes project initiation was hampered because the Mayor had to negotiate with other responsible bodies in areas where the Mayoral remit overlaps with others. While we recognise the Mayor's objective to act decisively on his manifesto promise, earlier engagement with partners may have highlighted where the GLA could best add value. This was the case for borough responsibility for education, where the Mayor's Scholars and Project Brodie programmes proposed Mayoral intervention in an area not under his direct control. Consequently, extended negotiation meant that significant amounts of time were spent clarifying a Mayoral role before engaging the necessary partners and getting the projects going.

7.3 We suggest that the Mayor could have begun some of the projects earlier if the GLA had more fully assessed where it could best add value. By gauging at the outset where there were gaps in the support currently offered to young people at risk, the Mayor could have invested in a smaller number of projects and not try to invest in areas where other bodies are already active.

7.4 There is clear value in the Mayor re-committing to the programme of work originally envisaged for Project Oracle as this is not something an individual borough would want to do. Understanding the drivers of serious youth violence work is essential to ensure that any future programmes are relevant and effective.

Consistent objectives

- 7.5 All the Time for Action projects have a common aim of supporting young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of disengagement by providing more opportunities, and so to help them avoid becoming involved in criminal activity. They are designed to achieve these objectives in different ways, and they are delivered in different contexts.
- 7.6 The level of evaluation built into each of the programmes differs. The projects are also using different methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions, some focus on quantifying outcomes, others use qualitative measures, and others use a combination. While it is appropriate that methods are tailored to the individual project, we see value in bringing together all these evaluations so that Londoners can assess the overall benefit of the Time for Action strategy. Evaluations should, where possible use, a consistent set of outcome indicators so that future funding decisions can be made on the effectiveness of each intervention in delivering the desired outcomes of Time for Action. Consistent indicators would also allow us to understand which approaches work best with different target groups of young people. We appreciate that given the varied nature of the undertaking that this will be very challenging to fulfil.

Working with the third sector

- 7.7 The Time for Action delivery plan recognises the wealth of expertise in the third sector, and seeks to support this by providing grants to suitable organisations to deliver the programme's objectives. Third sector-led projects are in place across London to support vulnerable young people or those at risk of involvement in crime, and many have run for many years, generating significant knowledge about effective approaches with young people. While the Mayor has sought to draw on this expertise, there may be difficulties when the same third sector bodies act in an advisory capacity to help shape programmes and then look to bid to be part of the delivery consortium. While we welcome the involvement of third sector experts in informing the design of specific projects, Time for Action could benefit from a more planned approach to involving and engaging the third sector, recognising the potential conflicts of interest that may arise and seeking to mitigate these risks.

- 7.8 At a budgetary level, the grants let through Time for Action are often relatively large compared to typical annual revenue for some community organisations, making the grants potentially unsuitable for these types of organisation. Understandably therefore Time for Action grants have been let to consortia but this may not resolve the financial instability some of the organisations have to manage, which can affect the overall ability of the consortium to deliver. Furthermore, Time for Action grants reflect a general trend towards the payment by results (PBR) model. While this provides assurance for the GLA, we question whether a PBR approach is viable for some third sector organisations that may require more frontloaded payments to enable them to deploy the resources needed for the project.
- 7.9 A further issue that arose in our discussions is the risk that as the voluntary sector seeks to follow the funding and shapes itself around that funding, the voluntary sector may not deliver the original cutting edge activity that ideally the public sector would want. This then “puts the onus back on the public sector to be far more visionary about its thinking”⁴² which is something that can only be done once a clear picture of what the problem is has been established.

⁴² Transcript of the Time for Action Panel meeting 23 January

Appendix 1 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Mayor to bring to the Assembly at the earliest opportunity the final evaluation of Project Daedalus and set out his thinking about a future funding strategy for the Heron unit.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor's Inquiry into Education must consider the role of Project Brodie as a strategic intervention to support vulnerable children's attendance at school. The Inquiry should set out lessons learned so far and options for further Mayoral support if any.

Recommendation 3

A full evaluation of all the Near-Peer mentoring programmes should be undertaken and published before any further roll-out can be considered.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor to commit to ring-fence a proportion of GLA group apprenticeships for looked after children.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor's Advisor to provide a detailed update on progress with meeting the mentoring targets across London and an interim evaluation report before the end of August 2012.

Recommendation 6

That the Mayor clarify the future role of his Mentoring Champion

Recommendation 7

That the GLA establish that best practice is served if the decision for all significant grants should be taken at a meeting of a Decision Making Panel and not outside of it and that a formal record of all decisions taken, including dissent, are kept.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should commission and publish comprehensive research into the underlying causes and drivers of youth violence in London.

Appendix 2 Orders and translations

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Hindi

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Bengali

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