

Subject: Tackling the Rise of Violent Crime in London

Report to: Police and Crime Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 20 September 2018

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides background information to the Police and Crime Committee for its discussion with invited guests to discuss the rise of violent crime in London.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report as background for the discussion with invited guests and notes the subsequent discussion.**

3. Background

- 3.1 As the Committee knows from its monitoring, for many months now violence in London has continued to rise. In early 2018 there was a spike in the number of homicides in the capital, with an average of 16 a month, and an increase in injury resulting from knives.¹ The Commissioner has said, however, that London is “beginning to see some stabilisation and indeed even potential reductions” in violent crime.
- 3.2 There are likely to be many factors behind the rise in serious violence, including organised criminal activity, particularly drug dealing, turf wars or so-called postcode rivalries, or personal slights that get amplified on social media. Some have cited the rise in violent crime to cuts to youth services, falling police officer numbers, lack of community confidence in the police, and the fall in sanction detection rates for knife crime as potential explanations.
- 3.3 Tackling weapon-based crime has been set as a priority for every borough, meaning that front line officers are expected to focus on reducing the use of weapons in their area. Each borough has also developed its own knife crime action plan. In addition to this, the MPS carries out a range of specific operational activity focused on tackling serious violence. Following the increase in homicides so far this year, Section 60 Stop and Search powers are being used, with “approximately half a dozen” in force on any one day. The MPS has also set up a violent crime taskforce. The

¹ Metropolitan Police, [Data and statistics](#)

taskforce—funded through an additional £15 million provided by the Mayor - includes around 160 officers, who will use local knowledge and intelligence to disrupt offending activity.

- 3.4 The Committee recognises that much of the focus of violence has been on knife crime, young people and gangs, but that violence is much broader than this and is often interlinked. Domestic abuse violence with injury offences, for example, have risen by 38 per cent since 2011. Gang activity makes up only a small proportion of serious youth violence (around five per cent in 2015-16) and gangs are known to be involved in about half of incidents where lethal guns are fired. And half of the homicides in the capital this year have been of those over 25.
- 3.5 There may be important lessons from other areas—both in the UK and internationally—where approaches have succeeded in reducing violent crime. Increasingly a greater focus is being placed on a ‘public health approach’ to knife crime and violence, which “seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence.” This is a long-term strategy for dealing with serious violence within a community.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The Committee is investigating is investigating the root causes of violence, as well as the short and long-term solutions. The terms of reference for the investigation are:
- To examine the causes of violent crime;
 - To assess whether, in the short term, the Mayor’s approach to tackling and preventing violent crime is effective in addressing those causes; and
 - To assess the longer term and alternative approaches to tackling violent crime and how they could work in London.

- 4.2 The Committee has, so far, heard from community organisations, youth workers, young people and partners such as the Met and MOPAC. It has also visited the West Midlands to hear about the violence prevention model in place in Birmingham.

Remit of the discussion

- 4.3 The Committee will hold an open discussion with invited guests to explore the practical solutions to the increase in violence in London. Questions for discussion with the guests may include:
- How can we make sure the root causes of violence are reduced?
 - What does a better relationship with the police look like?
 - What is the role for City Hall in helping you to prevent violence?
- 4.4 Guests invited to the session have been identified as key stakeholders or commentators on the issue of violence in London and will include youth workers, grassroots community organisations, third sector providers, the MPS, and young people.
- 4.5 The discussion at this meeting will help to inform the Committee’s output from its scrutiny investigation into violent crime in London. At its meeting on 24 May 2018, the Committee delegated authority to the Chairman, in consultation with party Group Lead Members and Caroline

Pidgeon MBE AM, to agree any output from the Committee's scrutiny investigation of the rise of violent crime in London.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications to the Greater London Authority arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
Contact Officer: Becky Short, Scrutiny Manager
Telephone: 020 7983 4760
E-mail: becky.short@london.gov.uk