

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Community Safety Board

24th September 2008

Item No.

3.

Young People and the Police

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Classification:

For information

Status:

Open

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This paper gives an update on the progress of the Youth Independent Advisory Group (YIAG), a project funded by the Community Safety Board (CSB) to inform the Police, the Council and their Partners on community safety issues. It follows on from a previous report to the CSB on the 26th June 2008 on the consultation report funded by the Community Safety Board about the perceptions young people have of the Police and community safety issues – this consultation provided the driver for the establishment of the YIAG.
- 2.2 The YIAG was launched in July 2008. Since then, the YIAG has proved itself to be fully functional in a variety of ways, undertaking a number of planned and ad hoc projects.
- 3.3 The updated report, 'Young People and the Police', which documents the history of the project, as well as the YIAG's agreed workplan for 2008-2009, can be found in the Appendices.

2. ESTABLISHING THE YIAG

- 2.1 The YIAG held its first meeting in July 2008 and continues to meet on a monthly basis, with additional meetings in between if the need arises, for example, site visits, delivering training or even involvement in tension monitoring.
- 2.2 At a functional level, the YIAG is informing the wider community safety strategy and operational agenda, acting as a sounding board on practical and

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strategic issues. It also has an advisory function on tactical issues affecting young people in our community.

- 2.3 So far as possible, the young people are providing objective advice and guidance which is distanced from their personal reality. This is to prevent a situation where the young people become unofficial 'informants' to the police on activity taking place in their area. However, in those cases where they young people may wish to give information which falls outside of this remit, arrangements have been put in place to ensure that this occurs through safe, moderated and, most importantly, official channels.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The 14 members of the group are broadly representative of the borough's youth population in terms of age (14 – 21), ethnicity and geographic location (north, middle and south of the borough). All of the young people have been recruited according to their particular interest in community and policing issues and they range from those who have had no criminal involvement, or even exposure, to those who have had previous and current experience of the criminal justice system.

4. GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 The day-to-day management of the YIAG is through Waltham Forest's Community Engagement Unit. Currently, monthly meetings of the YIAG are led jointly by the borough's Youth Engagement Officer and the Metropolitan Police's Youth Partnerships Inspector.
- 4.2 The activity and direction of the YIAG is guided by a steering group of officers from the Council's Community Safety Unit and Youth Offending Team as well as representatives from the Police and Community Safety Board.
- 4.3 Strategic direction will be given to the project from both the Community Safety Board and the Youth Crime Prevention Board. The YIAG will have responsibility for presenting information to the Community Safety Board on a quarterly basis, in the form of either tabled updates or attendance at group meetings. It has also been agreed that it can make specific requests for information to the Youth Crime Prevention Board if it furthers the agreed actions of the YIAG work plan.

5. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 5.1 A significant amount of work has taken place since the YIAG was established in July 2008.

Meetings: Three meetings of the group have been held. At least half of this time has been allocated to discussion of arising community safety matters in the community, for example, policing at summer festivals, gang rivalry and stop and search.

Agreed work plan: A work plan for 2009 – 2009 has been written by the YIAG, and agreed by a steering group of officers from the Metropolitan Police and various Council services. This outlines a series of tangible actions and

outcomes under each of the six areas they identified as key to the involvement of young people in crime. These were:

- Breaking the 'quick fix' system
- Get in there early!
- Train up parents
- Ongoing dialogue with the police
- Smart guidance
- A prison holiday

A full copy of the workplan can be found at Section 4 of the updated 'Young People and the Police' report attached.

Operational work: A number of the young people have been involved in the Knife Arch Operations which have taken place in the Chingford Area over the last few weeks. They have accompanied Police Officers in erecting the Knife Arches at the entrance and exits to train stations, and been involved in trying to obstruct those who are carrying knives. The young people provided an interesting perspective and feedback to those officers leading the operation.

Tension Monitoring: In the aftermath of the unfortunate death of CJ Jenkins, members of the YIAG helped inform the response of the Council and Police to unrest within the community, particularly amongst young people.

Stop & Search Training: On 24th September 2008, the whole panel will be involved in delivering Stop & Search training to 20 new police recruits in the borough. This will be a 4 hour training session where the group will present their considered opinions around this issue in a bid to enhance and 'humanise' the training given to officers. This is the first time that young people have been involved in Stop & Search training for the Metropolitan Police and is an exciting step forward for Waltham Forest. The event will be held at Norlington School for Boys, who will also put forward a number of their students to observe and participate in the session as an example of good practice in citizenship.

Reaching out to the Community: Members of the group have attended Cathall Community Safety Group to raise awareness of the project amongst residents.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 It is intended that the YIAG will be a flagship mechanism for engaging young people on community safety issues and will be an example of successful partnership working between the Council, the Police and the Community Safety Board.
- 6.2 Progress against the work plan and other ad hoc activity will be formally reported to the CSB on a quarterly basis.