

Haringey Council

Agenda item:

[No.]

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

On 1 December 2008

Report Title. Knife Crime – Feasibility Report on Proposed Scrutiny Review	
Report of: Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Contact Officer : Robert Mack, Principal Scrutiny Support Officer Tel: 0208 489 2921	
Wards(s) affected: All	Report for: N/A
1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required) 1.1. To consider the feasibility of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioning a full scrutiny review on knife crime.	
2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary) 2.1. N/A	
3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies: 3.1. Serious violent crime is a target within the Local Area Agreement for Haringey and this includes knife crime within it.	
4. Recommendations 4.1. That the Committee note the action that is being taken within Haringey to address the issue of knife crime, the significant reductions that have taken place in recent years and the limited potential gains from undertaking a specific scrutiny exercise on this issue. 4.2. That, for the reasons specified within the report, the Committee instead commission a scrutiny review on the issue of fear of crime when resources allow.	

<p>5. Reason for recommendation(s)</p> <p>5.1. There would appear to be limited potential gains from undertaking a full scrutiny review on the issue of knife crime whilst commissioning of a review on fear of crime is considered to have greater scope to produce tangible outcomes.</p>
<p>6. Other options considered</p> <p>6.1. The report outlines in detail the feasibility of the alternative option of undertaking a full scrutiny review on knife crime.</p>
<p>7. Summary</p> <p>7.1. A proposal has been made that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake an in depth scrutiny review on the issue of knife crime. Knife crime is a serious concern of local residents. However, there is no conclusive evidence that it is increasing within Haringey and in fact it appears that there has been a reduction in it in recent years. Many of the initiatives that are being undertaken within the Borough are centrally driven and therefore may not necessarily be susceptible to local influence through overview and scrutiny. Public anxiety about crime remains high and may not be reflected by the reality of crime. Fear of crime can also have a serious detrimental effect on the quality of life of residents. It is therefore suggested that a full scrutiny review on this issue be undertaken instead.</p>
<p>8. Chief Financial Officer Comments</p> <p>8.1. It is proposed to engage an external independent advisor to assist Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee into a Review of Knife Crime. The cost will not be excessive and can be met from an existing budget. The outcome of the Review may lead to a number of recommendations being made. The financial implications of these, if any, will need to be identified in due course.</p>
<p>9. Head of Legal Services Comments</p> <p>9.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report and makes the following comments.</p> <p>“In light of the Officer recommendations, the Head of Legal Services advises that there are no legal implications arising out of this report.”</p>
<p>10. Head of Procurement Comments – [Required for Procurement Committee]</p> <p>10.1. N/A</p>
<p>11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments</p> <p>11.1. People from black and ethnic minority communities have a disproportionately high risk of becoming a victim of knife crime. In addition, women and older people tend to suffer from higher levels of anxiety about crime.</p>

<p>12. Consultation</p> <p>12.1. Consultation arrangements will be considered for the scrutiny review when the project plan for the review that is commissioned is developed.</p>
<p>13. Service Financial Comments</p> <p>13.1. [click here to type]</p>
<p>14. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs</p> <p>14.1. Tables are included in the body of the report</p>
<p>15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</p> <p>15.1. Background papers are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime in England and Wales 2007/08 – Home Office Statistical Bulletin • Performance Information for MPA Full Authority on 24 July 2008: 12 Month Rolling Performance

16. Report

16.1 The issue of knife crime was suggested by the Chair as a possible future topic for an in depth scrutiny review. This report considers the issue in further detail and, in particular, what potential benefits and/or outcomes that there could be for focussing on it and whether these are sufficient to justify the commissioning of a review.

17. Background

Definition

17.1 Knife crime has become a widely used expression and is normally used in connection to stabbing incidents and homicides involving young people. Several widely reported tragic incidents have highlighted the issue and caused high levels of concern. However, the exact definition of what constitutes a knife crime and the consequential recording of incidents can be problematic and lead to incidents being included which bear little direct relationship to those that cause the greatest public concern.

17.2 The term can potentially encompass a very wide range of offences, for example:

- Offences in which an individual is stabbed;
- Those in which a knife is used in a threatening manner; and
- Those in which a knife happens to be in a person's back pocket, etc.

17.3 The production of a knife in the course of any crime, such as in a robbery or sexual assault, even if not used to cause injury, is regarded as a knife crime under any interpretation but it is less clear whether the term may also be applied to, for example, a burglary during the course of which the perpetrator is arrested and found to be in possession of a knife that was never produced or used. Incidents recorded as knife crime therefore do not necessarily involving a stabbing or indeed any physical harm being caused, although they may nevertheless cause significant distress.

Prevalence

17.4 Notwithstanding these issues, there is a strong public perception that there has been a significant increase in knife crime. The British Crime Survey (BCS) is regarded as the most reliable trend measure of violent crime as it is not affected by changes in reporting, police recording and local policing activity. It has been consistent in its methods since 1981 and is based on respondents actual experience of crime. According to it, knife-enabled crime (any crime involving a knife) in Britain over the past decade has remained stable at around 7-8% of all crime, comprising 30% of all homicides. In particular, the use of knives in violent incidents referred to by the BCS in 2007/8 was 6% and not statistically significantly different from 2006/7 (7%). However, the BCS does not currently include under 16s amongst the 40,000 people interviewed. The Home Office intend to include them in future years although they do not think that their experience will differ markedly from that of 16 – 17 year olds.

17.5 London wide knife murders appear to have increased in the last two years. However, statistics for Haringey show an overall decline from 2003/4 onwards. London wide figures, broken down by Borough, are as follows:

Knife Murder Offences broken down by Borough

Borough	Financial Year					
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009*
Barking & Dagenham	0	1	3	3	2	0
Barnet	1	0	3	2	2	1
Bexley	0	1	1	1	2	2
Brent	3	4	3	2	1	2
Bromley	1	1	1	1	4	0
Camden	1	4	2	3	4	0
Croydon	4	4	3	2	5	2
Ealing	2	2	2	6	2	1
Enfield	1	4	5	0	5	3
Greenwich	6	6	1	1	4	0
Hackney	4	5	3	5	4	2
Hammersmith & Fulham	1	2	0	2	3	0
Haringey	7	4	0	2	1	2
Harrow	1	0	0	2	1	0

Havering	2	0	1	3	0	0
Hillingdon	1	0	0	4	2	0
Hounslow	1	3	2	2	0	0
Islington	2	2	2	4	4	5
Kensington & Chelsea	0	1	1	1	0	0
Kingston Upon Thames	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lambeth	3	5	1	7	12	4
Lewisham	5	2	4	2	0	0
Merton	0	0	1	2	2	0
Newham	7	3	7	6	6	0
Redbridge	2	1	4	1	3	1
Richmond Upon Thames	1	0	1	1	0	0
Southwark	4	4	4	3	3	5
Sutton	0	1	0	0	1	2
Tower Hamlets	5	2	0	0	1	3
Waltham Forest	4	1	4	2	3	4
Wandsworth	0	0	3	5	2	1
Westminster	2	1	4	3	2	1
MPS Total	71	64	66	78	82	41

***Financial Year to Date 01/04/2003 and 31/08/2008**

The Data was extracted from the CRIS Offences base table for the period 01/04/2003 and 31/08/2008 with a confirmation date of 11/09/2008

- 17.6 One trend that may possibly be of particular significance is that in 2007 there were 32 victims aged 17 and under, a substantial rise on the 15 victims between those ages in 2006. In addition there have already been 26 victims in London this year.
- 17.7 The Metropolitan Police's crime statistics until recently included a specific category for knife enabled crime. This is taken to mean offences where a knife is used to injure, threaten or intimidate. This includes violence against the person (excluding possession of weapons), robbery, sexual offences and burglary. Data for knife enabled crime is only available from 2003. Knife enabled crime reached its peak in 2004 and only fell slightly in 2005 and 2006. The latest figures show a reduction in knife crime of 16% between 2006/07 and 2007/08. Total numbers were recorded in 10,220 in 2007/08. Within this total, there were 5,148 violence against the person offences (down 13%) and 4,713 robberies (down 19%). There was a sharp fall in knife enabled crime in 2007 of 13 per cent. Knife crime is now down 18 per cent since 2004 peak

Knife Enabled Crime



- 17.8 In March 2008, the Home Office brought out APACS (Assessments of Policing and Community Safety) as its new framework for assessing the performance of the police and their work with partners. This changed the definitions of a number of indicators and introduced a new one for knife crime from 2008/9 onwards. This uses a wider definition than that used by the Metropolitan Police's knife enabled crime category. Figures reported to the MPA using the new APACS definition also show a drop in knife crime offences from 11,642 between July 2006 and June 2007 and 9,997 between July 2007 and June 2008, a drop of 14.1%.
- 17.9 The 2006 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS) showed that overall 3% of young people aged 10 to 25 had carried a knife with them in the last 12 months for their own protection, for use in crimes or in case they got into a fight. However, just over half of these young people had only carried a knife once or twice in this period. The most commonly carried knife was a pen knife.
- 17.10 Reducing violence continues to be a major priority for the Safer Communities Partnership in Haringey. This is reflected in the identification of National Indicator (NI) 15: Serious Violent Crime as one of the 35 Improvement Indicators for the Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008/9 is the baseline year for NI15, however current data (April to June 2008) shows that Haringey ranks 5th lowest among its most similar boroughs, with 0.15 offences per 1000 population - significantly lower than the group average of 0.25.
- 17.11 Knife crime has been falling in Haringey during the last two to three years, and if the performance seen in the first two quarters of 2008/09 continues, knife crime will continue to fall. Current monthly statistics (using APACS) show the following:

Month-Year	Knife Offences	Crime
Jan-07	50	
Feb-07	72	
Mar-07	59	
Apr-07	37	
May-07	34	
Jun-07	44	
Jul-07	41	
Aug-07	38	
Sep-07	27	
Oct-07	35	
Nov-07	42	
Dec-07	34	
Jan-08	36	
Feb-08	36	
Mar-08	37	
Apr-08	30	
May-08	35	
Jun-08	28	

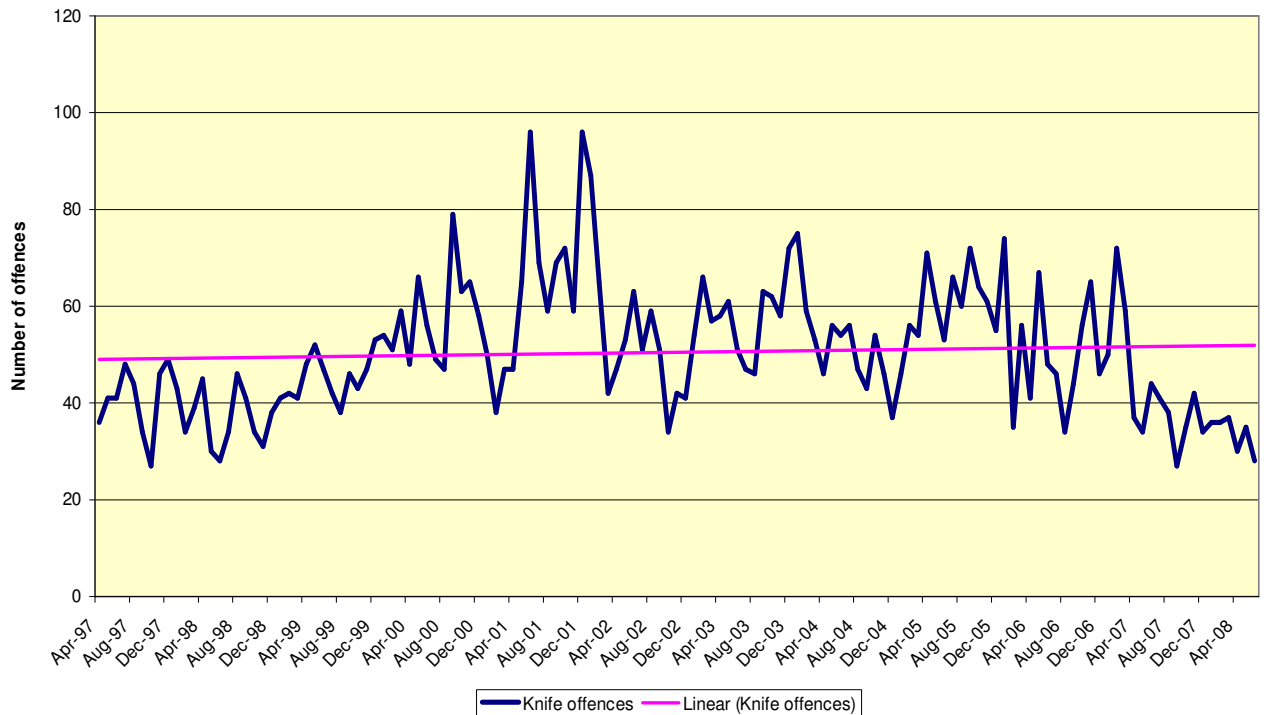
17.12 The number of offences is variable and there is a lot of fluctuation. Longer term statistics - from April 1997 to June 2008 – show a very slight upward trend. However, it should be noted that if the trend is calculated for the period April 1998 to June 2008 then it would be slightly down.

17.13 Whilst month-on-month data is helpful as an indicator, it is more useful to compare quarterly or annual figures. Quarterly data for 2008/09 is only available so far up to April-June 2008. In this period, there were 93 knife offences during April-June 2008 which was;

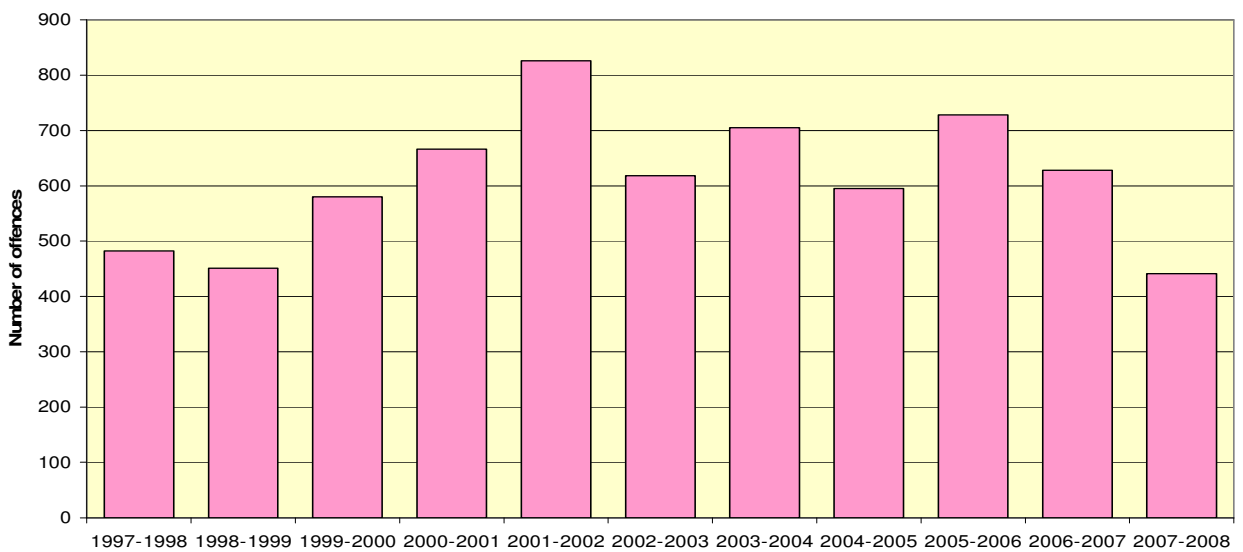
- 22 (19.1%) fewer knife offences compared with the same period last year
- 21.2% lower than in April-June 1997
- 55.3% lower than the peak (of 208) in April-June 2001

17.14 The chart below shows that, year-on-year, knife offences are now lower in Haringey than they have been at any time within in the last 11 years. In 2007/08 there were 441 knife offences, which was 29.8% lower than 2006/07 and 8.5% below that recorded for 1997/98. In addition, it is 46.6% lower than the peak of 826 in 2001/02. The number of knife offences has been decreasing since 2005/06.

APACS Knife Crime Offences by month



APACS Knife Crime Offences - Haringey



17.15 Some concerns have been raised that official figures may mask the true picture and one issue that has arisen is the fact that Accident and Emergency Services do not routinely pass on details of knife related injuries to law enforcement agencies. The government is currently looking at how this issue could be addressed and efforts have been made locally to resolve this.

17.16 In conclusion, there is little evidence of an upsurge in knife related crime within London and, if anything, it appears to be diminishing as a problem. This is particularly true of Haringey. However, in terms of murders, there is evidence of a London wide increase but Haringey has bucked this trend. In addition, there is also some London wide evidence that victims of knife homicides are getting younger although fortunately there is no evidence of this trend being repeated in Haringey.

18. Action to Address Knife Crime

- 18.1 Tackling knife crime is a major priority for the government and several initiatives have already been implemented on a national basis, such as the Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP) which was launched in June 2008. London is one of the areas included in the initiative. The TKAP is based on the Tackling Gangs Action Programme, which addressed the issue of gun-related crime across the four police force areas involved.
- 18.2 Enforcement activity has been increased across all the areas involved. Since its introduction, more than 55,000 people have been stopped and searched, 2,500 arrests have been made for knife-related offences and more than 1,600 knives have been seized.
- 18.3 As part of the TKAP programme, Operation Blunt2 was launched by the Metropolitan Police on 19th May 2008. The intention of it was to stop the killing of young people by weapons on the streets of London. It is a long term, pan London operation with the following objectives:
- To reduce serious violence involving young people as victims of knife crime and as offenders
 - To reduce the carrying of weapons by young people on the streets of London Borough of Haringey
 - To maintain the support of communities and young people for police action to reduce youth violence.
- 18.4 The focus of it is on targeting the most dangerous people and places and, in particular;
- To target the most violent young offenders on every borough, using intelligence to disrupt their activities and arrest them
 - To focus on times and places where anti social behaviour, disorder and youth violence are highest
 - To target those who carry knives, identify offenders and ensure that as many as possible are out before the courts
- 18.5 100 police officers have been assigned to it and they have made over 1,300 arrests for knife related offences since the beginning of June. In addition, the number of people charged with possession of a bladed article or knife since 1 April 2008 has increased 150% compared to the same period in 2007. However, only 3% of people stopped and searched by Operation Blunt officers have been found to be carrying knives.
- 18.6 A range of tougher penalties for possession of knives have been introduced including the doubling the maximum sentence for carrying one from two to four years, giving teachers the power to search pupils for weapons in schools and increasing the use of stop and search. Guidance from the Association of Chief Police Offices (ACPO) issued on 22 July makes it clear that anyone over the age of 16 caught in possession of a knife can now expect to be prosecuted on the first offence. Those under 16 can expect a formal final warning coupled with a knife education scheme to help them understand the potential consequences of carrying knives.

- 18.7 Revised guidance issued by the Sentencing Guidelines Council on 1 August states that the starting point for sentencing a level 1 (for the least serious offences) first time adult offender caught in possession for a knife who pleads not guilty should be 12 weeks in custody. Most recent figures show that people prosecuted for carrying a knife are now almost three times as likely to go to prison as ten years ago (6% in 1996, 17% in 2006), and the average sentence has increased by almost a third over the same period. A programme of intensive community sentences is also being developed where the court decides not to send someone to prison,
- 18.8 Police forces participating in the TKAP have also stepped up engagement with young people and have been working to provide specific educational packages for schools and to set up events informing young people of the dangers of carrying knives. They are also working with hospitals to share data on knife injuries and carrying out home visits and sending letters to parents of young people where intelligence suggests they are carrying knives.
- 18.9 A high-profile campaign £3 million national radio, website and mobile phone advertising campaign was launched on 28 May. It was developed by young people and aimed at young people, who worked on the concept and recorded the radio adverts. The web element of the campaign; www.bebo.com/itdoesn'thavetohappen hosted on the social networking sites Bebo and YouTube has so far received over 560,000 views.
- 18.10 Some concerns have been raised about possible negative consequences of the overall programme and, in particular, the increased use of stop and search. The former head of the Metropolitan Police's homicide prevention unit has voiced concerns that it could make gangs stronger and the problem worse by causing further disaffection amongst already marginalised young people. Her view was that a policy that was more focussed on targeting known individuals might be more fruitful. A four-year study by the Homicide Prevention Unit had found almost 90% of knife killers had previously been known to police. In addition, concerns have also been expressed that introducing discussion of the subject of knife crime into schools could unintentionally glamourise it and, in view of the fact that only a tiny minority of young people carry knives and it is only any issue for a very small number of schools, cause unnecessary anxiety.

19. Haringey violence and knife crime initiatives

- 19.1 Action to address violent crime is a particular priority of the Haringey Safer Communities Partnership and has been for some time. There are a wide range of local programmes which aim to prevent or reduce violence and in particular knife crime. Some of the projects which focus on weapons are described below. They can be separated between enforcement activities and those focussing on engagement with young people and diversion.

- **Operation Blunt 2**

- 19.2 Haringey Borough police met with key community members in May to discuss increased enforcement activities. Community representatives voiced their support for an increased use of stop and search powers and the use of Section 60 powers in order to tackle the use and carrying of knives in public places. Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 allows a senior

police officer to authorise officers to stop and search persons in a specific area, either where a serious public order problem is likely to arise, or for offensive weapons or dangerous instruments. The senior officer can authorise that the powers conferred by this section are exercisable at any place within that locality for a specified period not exceeding 24 hours. Failure to submit to a S60 search is an offence.

- 19.3 Other measures that have been used as part of this initiative in Haringey include intelligence-gathering, knife arches, search wands, weapon sweeps and specific operations to target offenders.

- **Test Purchase Operations**

- 19.4 Trading Standards and the volunteer police cadets carry out regular test purchase operations for knives in the borough. These operations serve to enforce laws around under age sales and to educate retailers about their responsibilities.

- **Video Sentries**

- 19.5 The Video Sentries initiative was devised as a means of combating crimes such as street robbery, burglary, theft and violent assault using unmanned, fixed surveillance cameras, deployed within premises in a crime prone area. These cameras are connected to time lapse digital video recorders and record pedestrian traffic continuously within the hotspot area. In this way a “snapshot” is available of people in the vicinity of a reported offence at the time committed providing both evidence and valuable intelligence. From descriptions given by victims or witnesses it is hoped that a still image of the suspect can be obtained from which a subsequent identification and arrest can be made.

- **Safer Transport Team**

- 19.6 The Safer Transport Team was launched in Haringey in April 2007. This team comprises two Sergeants and 18 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The team has three priorities:

1. To reassure members of the public and transport staff
2. To reduce crime in and around transport hubs
3. To reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) in and around transport hubs

- 19.7 The team provide high visibility patrols in three areas across the borough one of which is from Wood Green to Turnpike Lane; a team of 8 officers are dedicated to patrolling this area.

- **YOS/Red Cross Weapons Awareness Training**

The weapons awareness training sessions are held once a month for young offenders who have been sentenced for the offences of carrying an offensive weapon or a bladed article, robbery (where a weapon was used) or any other violence related offence, such as Assault, ABH or GBH. These sessions are also open to those considered ‘at risk’ of carrying weapons. The training will also be provided to some year six students in the borough. Evaluation of this programme has demonstrated positive outcomes for participants including a reduction in re-offending. A pilot knife referral scheme is being set up with

funding from Youth Justice Board and Home Office to provide more robust programme for those charged with weapons offences. This builds upon the good practice of the YOS / Red Cross Weapons Awareness training.

- **What's the Point?**

19.8 This anti-knife crime project is co-ordinated by Haringey Peace Alliance. This campaign targets young people aged 11-19 years and consists of informative comic books, presentations and a website with information about initiatives, opinions and activities for young people. The central aim of this campaign is to educate young people about the consequences of carrying a weapon. The campaign was re-launched at a peace breakfast on 16th September 2008.

- **Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) expansion**

19.9 The YIP is a tailor-made programme for 13-17 year olds who are at high risk of involvement in both violent and acquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour. In 2007 the YIP expanded to cover the whole of the borough and to work with a core group of 70 young people. YIP participants are provided with a range of developmental activities provided by YIP workers and volunteer mentors which challenge attitudes to crime and anti-social behaviour. The activities provided are designed to reduce those factors most associated with youth crime (including knife crime) and to enhance those 'protective factors that reduce the likelihood of offending. The intervention can also lead to recognised accreditation. Assessments of this year's core YIP group show an 85% reduction in criminal activities.

- **Search arches at CONEL**

19.10 Search arches are placed at CONEL on a random basis. This is said (by staff and students) to increase feelings of safety at the College.

- **Guidance to schools**

19.11 Haringey's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the borough's Safer School Partnership have worked together and alongside schools to consider the safety of secondary aged young people in relation to knife crime. This work culminated in a paper advising schools about the development of protocols for using metal detecting devices in schools. Protocols must be developed in consultation with school staff and circulated to parents before any metal detecting devices are used in school.

19.12 The central purpose of using such devices in schools should be as a method of deterring young people from carrying knives and to protect them both in school and in the community.

- **Screening of '*Kids, Knives and Broken Lives*'**

19.13 As part of the Partnership's contribution to Week of Peace this year, Haringey libraries screened '*Kids, Knives and Broken Lives*'. This documentary was part of the Disarming Britain series which investigated why young people carry weapons. The documentary stimulated an animated discussion with a panel of speakers including Cllr Santry, Adam Jogee (co leader of the Youth Council) and Inspector Chris Donaldson.

- **Value Life**

19.14 Value Life is an award winning anti-violence campaign led by students from Gladesmore School. The campaign aims to:

1. Engage young people by giving them the opportunity to become positive agents of change within the community by developing Value Life further
2. Educate young people about the issues and challenges surrounding gun and knife crime
3. Change the negative perception of young people from being the problem to being part of the solution
4. Develop positive collaborative relationships between students within the various school across the borough
5. Promote and encourage an anti gun and knife crime culture among young people.

19.15 In July 2008 students from Gladesmore were joined by young people from Park View Academy, Woodside High School, John Loughborough, Alexandra Park and Haverstock School (from Camden) for a tour of the borough on open top buses, delivering the value life message. The students then took part in a peace walk up Wood Green High Road and a Peace Concert at the Decorium.

19.16 Gladesmore are planning to involve more schools from neighbouring boroughs in 2009, to deliver the Value Life message to a wider audience.

- **Schools Against Weapons and Territorialism**

19.17 All Secondary schools in the borough were given the opportunity to apply for funding to develop a project challenging young people's attitudes towards weapons and territorialism. Seven schools and Haringey Sixth Form Centre received funding and are in the process of delivering their projects. These range from producing a documentary and establishing a school magazine to hosting a borough-wide day of sport. The outcomes of these projects were showcased on Value Life day (22nd July) and during the Week of Peace (14th – 21st September).

- **Breaking the Cycle**

19.18 A seminar about gun and knife crime was delivered at Woodside High School in June. This was organised by the Youth Inclusion Programme in partnership with the school. Breaking the Cycle is an American organisation including former gang members and a police officer from New York. They tell personal stories of life experiences that demonstrate how, through choosing to forgive, conflicts can be resolved. The seminar was attended by students from year 9 and 10 who described the event as emotional and inspiring.

20. Potential Scrutiny Involvement

20.1 Crime is consistently the biggest concern for local residents and both the residents and young peoples surveys for 2007/8 confirm this long term trend. Knife crime is likely to form one of the key concerns within this.

- 20.2 A scrutiny review could consider how the Safer Communities Partnership currently address the issue, look at what agencies could possibly do in addition and make appropriate recommendations. This could be achieved by listening to the views and suggestions of local stakeholders and younger people and also obtaining external input on successful initiatives that have been undertaken elsewhere. In addition, some independent external input could be commissioned to assist Members in their work.
- 20.3 However, it could also be argued that raising the profile of the issue again could serve to increase concerns about knife crime that are not borne out by local statistics, which show it to be declining in recent years. In respect of knife murders, which are currently the source of considerable public concern, numbers have also declined in Haringey despite the London wide increase.
- 20.4 In addition, there are limits to the outcomes that could potentially be achieved. Much of the current work to address knife crime is centrally driven by the Metropolitan Police Service and the Home Office e.g. Operation Blunt2 over which there is limited local jurisdiction. In addition, much effective action to address knife crime involves working with children and young people to try to influence their attitudes and divert them from crime. Such measures are, by their very nature, long term in nature and therefore hard to evaluate in the short term.
- 20.5 One of the strategic objectives of the Safer Communities Partnership is to address the fear of crime and one possible alternative option would be to consider the apparent discrepancy between the high levels of local public concern and the plethora of crime statistics that show a reduction in crime and, in particular, violent crime in Haringey. This has been demonstrated to some extent by the results of local stop and search exercises that have been characterised by relatively low numbers of young people being found to be carrying knives.
- 20.6 It is clear from this and the wider experience across the Metropolitan Police area that only a tiny minority of young people engage in knife crime and the vast majority behave responsibly. However, the lives of the majority may still be negatively affected by knife crime due to the escalating levels of anxiety that recent publicity and incidents have caused. This could mean, for instance, that less young people feel safe enough to go out at night. Not only can this curb their ability to enjoy their leisure time, if fewer people feel prepared to venture out at night it can ultimately make the streets more dangerous and frightening places. In addition, many young people have said that they carry knives because they feel scared. An increase in levels of anxiety about knife crime may therefore actually make the problem worse.
- 20.7 Fear of crime does not only affect young people and is an issue that has specific equalities implications. This is particularly true in the case of women where there have long been concerns amongst them about the safety of going out at night. A wide range of advice has been provided over the years from different sources such as travel in groups, do not get minicabs, always walk facing traffic, carry a rape alarm and even in some cases that women should make sure that you are home before dark. However, many women feel that they should be able to go out and about at night without fear of being attacked, raped or sexually harassed. Reclaim the Night has been an annual event for women since 1977 which involves them taking to streets in numbers to affirm

this right and increase confidence. Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in it and men have now also been involved in some campaigns.

20.8 Disproportionate numbers of victims of knife crime victims are from black and ethnic minority communities and therefore fear of crime is also likely to disproportionately affect them. In addition, homophobic crime can cause fear and alarm amongst the lesbian, gay and transgender community and limit their right to live a full and fearless life.

20.9 A scrutiny review could be commissioned to look at:

- Whether community perceptions of the risk of crime are matched by actual levels
- How fear of crime affects communities.
- How the Safer Communities Partnership address community anxieties and engages with the local community
- Local initiatives to improve community confidence and, in particular, those directed at the most vulnerable groups.
- What other local authority areas have successfully used to counter the fear of crime

20.10 Useful background information could involve the provision of appropriate statistical information and, in particular, relative levels of risk. Evidence could be gathered by speaking to relevant stakeholders and community organisations. In addition, Members may wish to be assisted in their work by an external independent adviser to provide an additional element of challenge as well providing input about the experience of other local authority areas. The reviews recommendations would be aimed principally at the Safer Communities Partnership