

Report Title: **Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Review – Support to Victims of Crime**

Report of: **Wayne Longshaw, Assistant Chief Executive, Policy, Performance, Partnerships and Communications**

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Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Non Key Decision

**1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required)**

To request the Cabinet's response, as proposed in this report, to the recommendations made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee following the above mentioned review

**2. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:**

2.1. Creating a Better Haringey: Cleaner, Greener, Safer

2.2. Safer for All 2008-2011

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 To note the key findings

3.2 To note and approve the response to each recommendation as suggested in the action plan at Appendix 1

**4. Reasons for recommendations**

Please refer to the Scrutiny Review report (attached)

## **5. Introduction by Cabinet Member**

I welcome this review and there are some valuable recommendations. Haringey has a robust and experienced partnership and I am confident that the recommendations we accept can and will translate into action. This review highlights the need to assess our governance structures at strategic and operational levels to ensure the best possible levels of co-operation and efficiency with minimal duplication, and the best possible service to victims of crime in the borough. Alternative approaches will need to be considered for any recommendation that implies a resource need in the current climate.

## **6. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

- 6.1 The proposed responses to the recommendations can be addressed within existing grant and / partnership budgets.
- 6.2 As Members will be aware, the outcome of the Autumn spending review is likely to impact on resources available to support victims of crime across all partners and further review may be required at that time on the allocation of scarce resources.

## **7. Head of Legal Services Comments**

- 7.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and makes the following comments:
- 7.2 The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime came into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006. Aspects of the Code do place obligations on the Council via the work carried out by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) see additional recommendation 16.
- 7.3 Mindful of the comments made by the Chief Financial Officer at paragraph 6 above, the Head of Legal Services advises that in the event of non compliance with the Code, that of itself would not give rise to the risk of any legal proceedings being issued by the victim of crime. The victim would, however, have the right to make a complaint under the Council's complaints procedure, and then onto the Ombudsman in the usual way once the complaints process has been exhausted.

## **8. Head of Procurement Comments**

N/A

## **9. Equalities &Community Cohesion Comments**

These recommendations equally apply to victims from all communities in the borough. We know that some communities are more affected by crime than others. By increasing support, we will by definition be offering a stronger net of support to members of those communities in particular.

## **10. Consultation**

10.1 The review received evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, including service commissioners and providers. It also received an indication of the views of victims and witnesses through engagement with volunteers from Victim Support and the Witness Service. The Panel explored the possibility of meeting directly with a group of victims but, after receiving advice from Victim Support, this was considered impractical as it was felt unlikely that it would be possible to get sufficient numbers of victims together who were prepared to share their experiences in the time available. Consultation was supplemented by documentary evidence on the views of victims and witnesses that was undertaken as part of a national survey of their experiences.

**11. Service Financial Comments:** The report focuses on strategic and policy issues arising from strategic partnership activity undertaken by the Council and its partners. The recommendations generally refer either to services that are funded by area based grant (ABG) or the Council's strategic partners.

## **12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

The background papers relating to this report are:

- Report to Overview & Scrutiny on 29 June 2009 – Overview and Scrutiny work programme
- Council Plan
- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Haringey Local Area Agreement

These can be obtained from Robert Mack, Principal Scrutiny Support Officer on 0208 489 2921, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, River Park House,  
E- Mail [rob.mack@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:rob.mack@haringey.gov.uk)

Appendix One

**Action Plan to Address the Recommendations Arising from the Scrutiny Review of  
Support to Victims of Crime**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action/Response</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>By When</b>
1	That SCEB collaborates with the LCJB group for Haringey to establish clearer strategic ownership and governance structures for the support of victims and witnesses and that closer working arrangements be developed between the two bodies on this and other areas where there is a shared interest and responsibility .(SCEB) (paragraph 3.10)	<p>This will be picked up at the Autumn Safer Communities Executive Board. A report will be requested which delineates between the core work and responsibilities of the LCJB and those of the SCEB. This should include proposals for improvements for discussion and agreement by the board.</p> <p>Some interface currently exists between these boards through the Police Borough Commander, who is Chair of the LCJB and Vice-Chair of the SCEB.</p>	<p>Community Safety Strategic Manager</p> <p>and</p> <p>Haringey Police Borough Commander</p>	October
2	That the SCEB works with the local LCJB group to assist it in the development of a joint area strategy and improvement plan for the borough, as required in response to the Joint Thematic Review, and that this considers fully the overall co-ordination	See above	<p>Community Safety Strategic Manager</p> <p>and</p> <p>Haringey Police Borough Cdr.</p>	October

	of services and any areas of duplication, overlap and inconsistency in services. (SCEB) (paragraph 3.10)			
3	That the installation of CCTV in the vicinity of the Magistrates Court in order to deter disorder be considered when decisions are being made by the Council and its partners on the future installation of cameras. (SCEB) (paragraph 4.17)	<p>There is a high level of police presence in and around Highgate Magistrates Court, which we believe will provide the most effective deterrent to disorder.</p> <p>CCTV is only one of many crime and disorder deterrent responses and is not always effective. In the absence of robust evidence and a business case to the contrary, we do not see a rationale for this suggestion.</p> <p>Furthermore, there is currently no funding available for the purchase or installation of this equipment.</p>	<p>Court Manager,  Branch Prosecutor Crown Prosecution Service</p> <p>and</p> <p>Community Safety Team</p>	-
4	That the Police Service and the CPS be requested to establish, in consultation with the Witness Service, a system for ensuring that a relevant senior Witness Care Unit officer is notified immediately of any instances of the details of witnesses requiring support not being passed onto the Witness Service and especially vulnerable or intimidated witnesses and that the number of such cases and their cause be monitored. (Police/CPS)	The Police Victim Focus team makes contact with all screened-in victims of crime except domestic matters which are catered for in a different process. The WCU makes contact with all victims where a subject has been charged via phone first and then through follow-up letters and subsequent agreed correspondence. This is coupled with contact from the CPS and the Court witness service unit. All of the mentioned contacts are	<p>Haringey Police</p> <p>and</p> <p>Branch Prosecutor, Crown Prosecution Service</p>	Ongoing

	(paragraph 4.21)	part of the embedded process with the current criminal justice system. There are effective and efficient systems in place that notify the relevant units of the needs of a victim at different stages of the criminal justice process and capture information. This is monitored and any failure to comply with these systems will be pursued		
5	That local strategic partners raise this issue of the accommodation needs of the Witness Service at Highgate Court House with the LCJB and jointly explore whether improved arrangements can be made. (SCEB). (paragraph 4.23)	This is outside the remit of most partners. However, we will invite the issue to be aired at the next meeting of SCEB. Those responsible will be asked to propose whether any options for improvement exist.	Chair, LCJB	October
6	That, as part of wider measures to increase awareness of the services offered by Victim Support, the Police Service be requested to reinforce the need for police personnel and, in particular, front line officers, to determine whether victims of crime wish to be referred. (Police (para4.32)	The current police priority is to improve public confidence and officers are briefed locally to make sure that the quality of their encounters with all members of the community is a positive one. This is embedded in their training and entails dealing with the needs of the person as required i.e. vulnerable victim/witness. All officers have received the briefing on professionalism and referral as part of the Commissioner's drive to improve the service provided. Victims and witnesses satisfied with contact from criminal justice system in Haringey is at	Police Chief Inspector for Safer Neighbourhood	Ongoing

		<p>82%; 2% above the London average.</p> <p>We note the key role of the Safer Neighbourhood Chief Inspector and we will work closely with the newly appointed officer.</p>		
7	That a visit to Victim Support be included as part of the training provided to probationary police officers within the borough. (Police) (paragraph 4.32)	Effective victim awareness and liaison should be an integral part of police training. The Manager of Victim Support will agree with the newly appointed SNT Chief Inspector how best to keep this training comprehensive and up-to-date	<p>Police Chief Inspector</p> <p>and</p> <p>Manager Victim Support Haringey</p>	September
8	That strategic partners, in liaison with Victim Support, consider the provision of access, when required, to appropriate psychological support for Victim Support volunteers. (SCEB) (paragraph 4.37 )	This will be dealt with as an integral part of supervision. Volunteers currently receive one to one supervision every 6-8 weeks from a Senior Co-ordinator. This person is available to listen to any concerns and help them cope. Supportive and educational team meetings are also taking place every 6-8 weeks. All volunteers are invited to discuss and air views at the North Area Forum. We would also take this opportunity to re-iterate the importance of the robust vetting of volunteers.	Manager Victim Support Haringey	Ongoing
9	That the Police Service, in consultation with Victim Support, be requested to	We propose that one SNT Inspector be designated as the key contact point for	Manager Victim Support Haringey	September 2010

	develop a system for obtaining regular feedback from Victim Support volunteers on any relevant issues that may have arisen in their work with victims. (Police) (paragraph 4.39	Victim Support volunteers for the early flagging up of important issues and to facilitate the smooth exchange of selected information and intelligence	Chief Inspector Safer Neighbourhoods	
10	That the proposal to commission a review of support services for young people and ,in particular, increasing their awareness of Victim Support services and encouraging the reporting of crime by them, be supported. (SCEB/C&YPS) (paragraph 5.2)	A new contract has been signed with funding from ABG 2010-11 for the delivery of awareness and targeted support for young victims of crime. This contract requires that the Victim Support Officer work closely with Council departments. And key partners to provide a mainstreaming plan to embed this work in future years, thus alleviating reliance on external grant funding	Community Safety Strategic Manager and Manager Victim Support	In place since April Monitored quarterly
11	That the YOS be requested to follow up all letters to victims regarding restorative justice processes in order to explain the process fully and encourage a greater level of participation. (Asst. CE PPP&C) (paragraph 5.8)	Current position is that all victims of YOS clients are contacted by letter (currently being revised) and offered restorative approaches. The police office vacancy is due to be filled in the next few weeks and this person will make face to face contact with victims in an attempt to increase the levels of participation.	YOS Strategic Manager and YOS Police Sergeant	July
12	That the Council and its partners consider the future funding	Sustainable funding concerns apply to all services that currently rely heavily	Head of Safer Stronger	October – December



	arrangements and strategic role of the ASBAT with a view to establishing a sustainable service model, including access to support for victims. (SCEB) (paragraph 5.16)	on external grants and this will have to be looked at in the round. Creative and alternative ways of delivering high quality services for less will be required across many Council services	Communities	
13	That statistical information on the nature of abuse suffered by clients be routinely collected by Hearthstone. (Asst. CE PPP&C) (paragraph 5.21)	A great deal of information is already routinely collected and presented regularly to the DV Strategic Board. Specific requests have to be made for accessing detailed breakdowns of all types of domestic violence incidents but this can be done. Managers should approach the Community Safety Data Team if this is required	Hearthstone Manager and Victim Support Manager	Ongoing
14	That the Council's Domestic Violence Co-ordinator be requested, in liaison with the Hearthstone Centre and Victim Support, to compile detailed statistics on the prevalence of domestic violence affecting men and that a target that is consistent with this be set for the employment of men in relevant domestic violence services. (Asst. CE PPP&C) (paragraph 5.26)	Best practice from other boroughs will be investigated to establish how they respond to this issue. Relevant managers will also meet to scrutinise the current data with a view to validating and analysing it before it is re-presented to the DV Partnership Board	Hearthstone Mgr. VS Managers	Sept/Oct
15	That the role undertaken by the IDVAs be reviewed with a view to establishing a more sustainable means of providing the support that they currently provide and addressing any overlap that there might be with other support services. (Asst. CE PPP&C)	The SCEB Performance Management Group has agreed funding for this financial year (2010-11) for the continuation of IDVA work – someone is already in place but funding was due to cease on 31 May	Principal Equalities & Diversity Officer	Ongoing

	(paragraph 5.29)			
16	That the YOS confirm compliance with section 9 of the Code for Victims section 9**	This will be done at the next meeting of the Executive Board	Head of Service, Safer & Stronger Communities	October

\*\* This is an additional recommendation following advice from legal services.