

CROYDON SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

AGENDA

**Meeting to be held on Wednesday 18 January 2017 at 6.30 pm
in the Community Space, Mint Walk, Croydon**

- 1. Welcome and introductions**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2016**
- 4. Focus on Domestic Violence**
- 5. Any Other Business**
- 7. Date of next SNB meetings**

Wednesday 15 March 2017

CROYDON SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD (SNB)

MINUTES OF 21 SEPTEMBER 2016 MEETING

Marion Burchell	IAG
David Palmer	Aurora LGBT Police Consultative Group
Councillor Hamida Ali	Croydon Council
Councillor Steve O'Connell	Croydon Council and GLA
Councillor David Wood	Croydon Council
Ashtaq Arain	Faiths Together in Croydon
Tina Salter	North Neighbourhood Panel
James Stremes	Central Neighbourhood Panel
Laura Scott-James	Independent Custody Visitor Panel
Andi Opie	Director of Safety
Chief Supt. Andy Tarrant	Croydon Police
Ilona Kytomaa	SNB administrator

Also in attendance:

Cliff Hilderly, Lewis Collins, Morgan Younger, Bushra Ahmed, David Mitchell, Gurvinder Doal, Kelly Dummer, Rebecca Hitchen, Christiana Bekoe, Matt Bentall, Jan Eublanks, Sarah Leaky, Susan Patterson-Smith, Alexandra Gaeth, Mike Griffiths, Karen Pearce, Paul Brightly-Jones, Ian Williams, Kara Hitchin, Angela D'Souza, Omari Faria, Sharon Seaborne, Emily England, Elizabeth Ash, Victoria Sullivan, Dipak Mistry, Oliveene Whittaker, Anne Giles, Winifred Eyison, Jon Bickley, Karen Chillman, Clinton Waller, Jamie Broughton, Samantha Tuitt, Peter Clark, Liz Dunbar, Sylvia Simpson, Josh Talbot, Dylan Mullings, S. Parlak, Charlotte Strange, Ashley Smith, and Liam Halpin.

1	Welcome and introductions The Chair welcomed all present.
2	Apologies for absence Apologies were given by Marzia Nicodemi and Jean Pikett.
3	Minutes of the AGM held on 8 June 2016 The minutes were approved by all present.
4	Proposal to add the Asian Resource Centre to the membership of Croydon's Safer Neighbourhood Board

	<p>Ashtaq Arain gave an overview of the work of the Asian Resource Centre, which had been set up in 1999 and which aims to provide capacity building and to help Croydon's Asian communities to access local services.</p> <p>Ashtaq Arain outlined the advantages of the membership of the Asian Resource Centre, namely to enable the SNB to reach out to Asian communities and to use the organisation's database information.</p> <p>Ashtaq Arain proposed that the Asian Resource Centre become a member of the SNB. Cllr Hamida Ali seconded this proposal. The Asian Resource Centre was therefore formally added to the membership of the SNB.</p>
5	<p>Focus on gangs in Croydon</p> <p>For the first part of this agenda item, the Chair invited guests at each table to share the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the key issues that are being faced with regard to gangs in Croydon in the experience of the guests 2. possible solutions to address these issues <p>Each table was invited to share their thoughts with others present.</p> <p>The views of each table are listed in the appendix to these minutes. Common themes voiced were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misuse of social media by gangs • Drugs • Carrying of knives • Absence of fathers as role models • Young women in gangs • Sexual exploitation • Lack of youth provision • Lack of information on support available in the borough • Mopeds and quadbikes • Gang wars • Recruitment into gangs by older members • Mental health issues among young people • Lack of partnership work among support services <p>It was observed that young people were often more up to date on current gangs issues than some service providers including the police.</p> <p>It was observed that increasingly young children were recruited into gangs. Some participants felt that schools should do more to prevent or tackle the offending perpetrated by gangs.</p> <p>Solutions put forward at the meeting included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education to get young people to understand the consequences of their actions • Educating the parents too to tackle the risk of offending • Training for staff • Mentoring

- Building good relationships with the police
- Reintroduce youth centres/clubs
- Encourage involvement in cadets, rangers, scouts, etc.
- Improved mental health support
- Effective partnership work
- A better use of Stop and Search to bring down the incidence of knife crime

Guests commented that once in custody, young people did not get access to activities that could help their rehabilitation.

It was suggested that the borough should have a network of services that can provide a prompt response in case of emergency. Outreach workers attending the meeting also urged other agencies to make use of their services.

PRESENTATION ON TACKLING CRIMINAL GANG ACTIVITY

Following the above discussions, a presentation was given on gangs and measures being taken to tackle criminal behaviour being perpetrated by such groups. It was given by Cliff Hilderly (Youth Offending Service Gangs Manager) and Lewis Collins (MPS Detective Inspector, Gangs, Missing children and Child Sexual Exploitation).

Officers stated that while a number of young people in Croydon were involved in gangs, the total percentage was far lower than in other boroughs such as Wandsworth, which had about the same number of gang members but a significantly lower total youth population.

Officers provided information on the gangs being worked with in Croydon, and on their affiliations and conflicts with other gangs operating in Croydon, as well as Lambeth, Merton, Wandsworth and Bromley.

Board members heard that a reduction in turf wars had been observed, but that there had been a rise in drug dealing, child sexual exploitation and missing children. Officers meet on a weekly basis to discuss activity relating to the 15 most dangerous gang members.

The recent fatal stabbing at Monks Hill was discussed. Officers stated that all non-arrested gang members would receive a visit from the police to discuss their safety and encourage them away from criminal activity. Some individuals are receiving one to one support from the police once a week and mechanics courses are being run for individuals who have been involved in illegal moped racing and theft.

Officers explained that there was a particularly high level of activity involving gangs from Lambeth, as a number of their members had been placed in foster care in Croydon.

Officers outlined the various types of interventions being delivered to coax gang members away from criminal behaviour and towards education, training or employment. The challenge often involved dealing with an individual who was a victim of crime as well as a perpetrator. They explained that enforcement was the last result, after engagement had failed to obtain the desired effect. Support

includes assistance with housing where relevant, group work in the community and at school and referring the gang members' families to appropriate services. Interventions include disruption and enforcement through partnership work. Officers outlined the various disruption and enforcement tools being used, such as dispersal zones, gang injunctions, pro-active operations, curfews and bail conditions and criminal behaviour orders.

Officers gave an outline of work carried out on "County Lines". It has been found that a large number of urban **drug-dealing gangs have expanded their activity into rural and coastal towns**. It is known that these groups are recruiting and exploiting local vulnerable adults and children to help them. Many of the places affected are coastal towns with high levels of unemployment, mental health issues or crime. The majority of the rest are more affluent areas with good transport links to major cities. "County Lines" activity begins with gangs taking over premises in the target towns, by coercion, by using property belonging to local addicts who are paid in drugs, or by beginning a relationship with a vulnerable female. They use common marketing tactics to get established, including "introductory offers". Officers explained that London gangs operated in seaside towns such as Hastings and Margate and as far afield as Norwich and Plymouth.

Looked after children are lured to such towns and thus go missing as they get employed to steal drugs and money. Some end up stealing the money obtained and being pursued by their employers, with a price on their heads. Officers endeavour to protect any children caught through a child trafficking order. While it needs to be acknowledged that such children have offended, it needs to be stressed that they are also very vulnerable.

Officers giving the presentation stated that police officers had decided to amalgamate their work on child sexual exploitation, gangs and missing people as there was a significant overlap in the individuals affected by these three. The police was working proactively with cab firms and public transport operators to identify individuals involved in the above activities and to detect any emerging travelling trends. In addition, presentations and interactive sessions are being given in secondary schools to alert pupils to the dangers of gang offending, county lines, etc.

Board members were given an overview of the networks with which gangs officers liaise to tackle gang-related offending and provide support to individuals affected. They include Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, meetings of the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel and the Joint Agency Group.

Officers explained that future work to tackle gang activity would include the following:

- Gangs prevention work
- Moped theft prevention
- Work with Albanian youths
- Child Sexual Exploitation and gangs mapping
- Work to deal with County Lines
- Securing further MOPAC funding for this work

Officers added that they were planning to develop a "community voice" in the next three to six months to tackle gang issues.

	<p>Officers were thanked for their informative presentation.</p> <p>Tara Young, Home Office researcher, stated that more data on absent fathers was needed to understand the impact of their lack of involvement with their children. It was acknowledged that the background of young people supported by the Youth Offending Service was usually well researched but that there existed no borough-wide figures on trends and on the outcomes for children raised by single mothers.</p> <p>The police were questioned about the sharp increase in stabbings in New Addington. They were asked whether this had been due to a decrease in Stop and Search. The Borough Commander stated that there were plans to increase searches but to ensure that they were based on targeted intelligence. He appealed to those present to share relevant intelligence whenever it was obtained. In addition, the police was hoping to increase the size of the dedicated schools officers team to educate local pupils on safety issues in the borough. The Borough Commander also urged all present to invite the police at their public events in order to foster better relations between officers and local communities.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all present for attending the meeting. She stated that drawing up a directory of relevant services could significantly help to improve access to relevant support services and partnership work. David Mitchell (Educational Excellence and Wellbeing) undertook to carry out the work.</p>
6	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There was none.</p>
7	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS</p> <p>Wednesday 18 January 2017 in the Community Space Wednesday 15 March 2017 in the Community Space</p>