

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 11 April 2013

Subject: Report of the Harrow Partnership Board Meeting held on 13 March 2013

Responsible Officer: Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Case Study Appendix

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report summarises discussion at the meeting of the Partnership Board held on 13th March 2013

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

This report sets out the Partnership's decisions reached at a recent meeting.

Options considered

None

Background

The Partnership Board comprises representatives of the Council, the Police, The Fire Brigade, the Health Service, the Further Education Sector, Business and the voluntary and community sector. It meets to consider issues that will influence the future of the borough and consider how they take forward the ambitions set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

After each Board meeting, a report of the business considered is made to Cabinet for information.

Current situation

At the Board's most recent meeting on 13^h March, papers were considered relating to progress made by Safer Harrow, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership; by the Families First project and in addressing the need to improve services for children and young people. The Board also received a report on the business considered by Harrow Chief Executives.

Safer Harrow update

Safer Harrow is the local Community Safety Partnership. It includes representatives of the Police, the Council, the Fire Brigade, the Probation Service, the local Magistrates' Court and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). It co-ordinates, oversees and/or receives reports on the work of the Police, the Drug Action Team, the Youth Offending Team, Violence Against Women and Girls, Hate Crime and Community Tension, Community Champions, Anti-Social Behaviour, the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and the Integrated Offender Management Scheme (IOM). It also oversees the production of the annual Strategic Assessment of crime trends in Harrow which provides the basis for the development of the Community Safety Plan

The report drew particular attention to the Integrated Offender Management Scheme which identifies offenders at the highest risk of re-offending and brings a combined support and supervision offer to try to reduce or eliminate re-offending.

Often, people leaving prison have no accommodation to go, no prospect of employment and as little as £46 until their benefit applications are processed. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that a high proportion tend to re-

offend, perhaps believing that they have little or no stake in ordinary society. The IOM scheme ensures as far as is possible that offenders have somewhere to live on release from prison, that their benefit application has been made and processed before their release, that they are registered with a GP within a few days of release, that, if necessary, they have access to drug and/or alcohol services and that employment opportunities are identified.

Perhaps most importantly, offenders are met at the prison gate and found an immediate place to stay and the opportunity to start a new life free from crime. At the same time, the Police and Probation Service maintain a strict supervision regime designed to support and maintain the resolve to avoid trouble in future.

Harrow's IOM scheme includes a small number of prolific non-statutory offenders (people sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment) who would otherwise receive no support since they are normally excluded from the Probation Service's remit.

The scheme became operational in September 2012 and so detailed statistics on performance are not yet available. However, anecdotally, the scheme has seen some significant successes in helping people to break a pattern of self destructive behaviour which has had a high impact on the community in the past.

The report also highlighted the role of the Mothers Against Gangs group. This group grew from a spate of gang related stabbings early in 2012 and which threatened to escalate. The Police sought a new way of countering the pull that gang membership has on some young people and to help parents recognise the signs of gang affiliation in the first place. They brought together the mothers of some of the young men involved and supported them to establish a self help group, provided access to experts and training and provided them with the encouragement and skills they needed to address problems in the own families and their wider community. MAG has grown over the year and is fully established as a charity with a web presence.

The website says: "Mothers Against Gangs (MAG) is an independent support group of mothers from all backgrounds who have come together as a result of our personal experiences with family members. By using these experiences and collective knowledge we are able to support families with concerns or issues regarding young people. We offer support and advice to parents and young people involved in or on the cusp of gang involvement.

As parents ourselves, we believe if you can detect the signs early you may be able to prevent things from getting out of control. We have connections with statutory services so if there's anything we feel we are unable to help our clients with ourselves, we will either refer them to these services or point them in the right

We wish to reassure the parent or young person. We want you to know that at Mothers Against Gangs we have mums who have been through similar experiences to what you may be going through and we are always willing to help. We are aware of signs to look out for.

We know how traumatic the experience of attending police stations and courts can be for the whole family and how daunting it is because most people don't know how the legal process works or what to expect. These can sometimes drag on for months and months and have a knock on affect with schools, jobs, relationships, family, health, etc.

Our ultimate goal is to create a safe and peaceful environment in which there is understanding, respect and harmony between the mothers of different cultures so that our children do not become rivals but work together as one. That our children develop respect for authority, become good citizens and no longer feel the need to choose the life of gang culture but to be self sufficient and reliant.”

Priorities for 2013-14

Safer Harrow has received the draft Strategic Assessment examining the recorded crime trends in the period October 2011 to September 2012. This has led to the adoption of the following crime types as priorities for 2013-14:

1. **Residential burglary.** Residential burglary is still relatively high in Harrow. Residential burglary also has a major impact on victims with each offence usually resulting in two or more victims.
2. **Anti-social behaviour (ASB).** While Harrow has low overall crime compared to other London boroughs, a high proportion of Harrow residents are concerned about issues such as vandalism, teenagers hanging around, public drunkenness and drug dealing in their local area.
3. **Domestic violence and sexual offences.** These offences make up a large proportion of offences in Harrow, with sexual offences often unreported.
4. **Youth violence.** While there are relatively low levels of youth offending in Harrow, last year saw a spike of serious youth violence with youth groups/gangs in the Wealdstone and Rayners Lane areas.
5. **Personal robbery.** While this crime is relatively low in Harrow, it has increased in recent years. The victims are also increasingly young.
6. **Violent crime.** Violent crime is the most serious offence category which residents expect to be prioritised by Safer Harrow.

Work on the development of the Community Safety Plan to address these and other crimes is underway.

Funding Bids

Safer Harrow has also submitted bids to MOPAC for funding from the new London Crime Prevention Fund. The applications address the crime priorities identified in the Strategic Assessment and include:

- Continuation funding for the Community Worker supporting the IOM Scheme;
- Funding to support the creation of a virtual single ASB Team across the Council, the Police and, hopefully, one or more social landlords;
- A project to secure the reduction and prevention of violence against women and girls in Harrow. The key outcome is to prevent girls and young women from becoming victims, and boys and young men becoming the perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse;
- Funding to support the West London Rape Crisis Centre;
- A continuation of the Autumnal Nights anti-burglary initiative;
- A programme to supply personal alarms to people likely to be a risk of personal robbery;
- Funding for the continuation of the Drug Intervention Project; and
- Funding to extend the Drug Intervention Project to deal with alcohol.

Families First

The Partnership Board considered a progress report on the Families First project which is Harrow's response to the Government's Troubled Families initiative. The Families First approach explores ways to deliver a whole family approach with our children and families to improve outcomes at less cost to the public purse.

Troubled families are those that have problems and often cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector. In December 2011, the government launched a new programme to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families in England by 2015. The aims of the Troubled Families Programme are to get children back into school, reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour, put adults on a path back to work and bring down the amount public services currently spend on them. The project is funded from central government in a combination of up-front payments and payment by results. Harrow Council must work with 395 families before the end of the project in May 2015. Children from troubled families often go to be the next generation of troubled families. By working together and intervening earlier with families we can reduce the incidence of intergenerational cycles and improve outcomes for the families.

Families First aims to change the way we work with families, and to achieve more effective sustainable long-term outcomes for families while delivering cost effective services. This includes securing a step change in service delivery from focusing on individual children to working with a whole family; developing joined up local services; ensuring each family has an experienced and well trained key worker that can support families to understand their needs and support them to bring about sustainable change; and research into the interventions used by services to develop outcomes focused commissioning.

Three case studies arising from the work undertaken so far are attached as an appendix.

Services for Children and Young People

Following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspections last year, an Improvement Plan covering all services contributing to the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people was prepared. The actions in this Improvement Plan have now been substantially completed but further improvements to services are required, not least as the standards expected have been raised.

The paper that the Board considered is about establishing a shared definition of good. The report identified that there were different perspectives from which good could be defined and assessed and proposed five different, although complementary, descriptions of good. These were from the view points of:

- The local and community based political view of good.
- The corporate and organisational view of good
- The professional practice view of good
- The regulatory view of good and
- The outcomes view of good.

This work is the basis for a shared understanding across the wider sector partnerships which deliver services for children as well as through sector led improvement arrangements that provide appropriate challenge and support.

Harrow Chief Executives

Harrow Chief Executives reported that they had also considered the items on the Board's agenda with the addition of a presentation on the work of harrow in Business who had been invited to send a representative to the HCE meeting.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications

Equality Impact Assessments have or are being undertaken for all of the projects referred to in this report.

Corporate Priorities

The Partnership's priorities support aspects of all of the Council's Corporate Priorities

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name Hasina Shah

on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 29 March 2013

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mike Howes, Service Manager, Policy and Partnerships

Tel: 020 8420 9637

Background Papers: Agenda of the Partnership Board - 13 March 2013

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

*[Call-in does not apply, as the
report is for information only]*

Case Study 1

- Beatrice, a lone parent, and daughter Lorraine living in unsuitable accommodation
- Lorraine in Year 10
- No contact with Father
- In contact with Sister and Grandmother
- Beatrice assaulted by sister's partner
- Beatrice claiming benefits including DLA

The family has been known to a number of services since 2006. Beatrice previously engaged in substance misuse over a number of years. She was associating with a number of inappropriate males with links to drug use and dealing.

Mother has long-term mental health problems but failed to attend any appointments.

Lorraine had not attended school for 2 years.

Their flat was in very poor condition but a number of factors had prevented any progress with the housing department.

"Families can be quite negative at the beginning. They think they've heard it all before so I don't go in too deep at first"

"I'm persistent. I say 'Hello, how are you?' I just try to be human"

"I make time to sit and listen. Sometimes it is best to avoid getting out the notepad and sit there writing."

Activity with the family

Both Mother and daughter were very mistrustful of any agency involvement and viewed interventions in a very negative way. The recent decision to educate Lorraine at home was in part designed to avoid any further bother from the council. There were a number of missed appointments for both housing and for Beatrice's counselling. The appointments with housing often became very fractious and upsetting.

The Key Worker set out to create a clear and differentiated relationship with the family, where the intensive early contact consisted of making time to listen to the family.

Over time the Key Worker was able to tease out the barriers holding back the family and build up a package of support. Beatrice realised her daughter's education was at risk but simply did not know how to go about addressing the issues. The appointments with housing were seen as daunting and provoked more anxiety. She also found it hard to find the courage to attend counselling sessions.

The Key Worker focussed on the priorities and getting the daughter back to school. This was partly achieved following a robust negotiation with a head teacher. The school uniform presented another barrier to getting Lorraine

back in school. The Key Worker arranged a purchase from the family's personalised budget as part of their overall support package and made it conditional on the family's continued engagement. The school uniform had a noticeable effect on the daughter and she felt much more positive about going back to school.

Making quick and effective changes of this type is shown to have impact and get 'things moving' for the family. It also helped with the negotiations for Beatrice to attend the counselling sessions, and understand the benefits of doing so and that further change was possible.

The Key Worker helped with preparation for appointments with housing, to build up Beatrice's independence, and made contact with the housing department to outline some of the issues facing the family. Eventually the Key Worker was able to help with the 'bidding' process for a new place to live. Key to helping with this process was managing Mum's anxiety.

Along with the offer of the flat Housing provided funding for minor decorating and the purchase of essential items. The Key Worker used this as an opportunity to develop Beatrice's budgeting skills.

The level of intensive support has ended but the Key Worker is still available if Beatrice still needs a quick chat.

The family were supported for 4 months and there are a number of positive results:

- Beatrice is more in control of mental health and has completed her counselling sessions
- Living in a new flat
- Beatrice's appearance and demeanour greatly improved
- Lorraine's school attendance up from 0% to 98% since October

Indicative savings

Cost of missed appointments in the NHS - £240

Cost 5 weeks of truancy - £1,418

Case Study 2

- Mum, a single parent on benefits
- Older son in prison
- Daughter lives nearby, earns a very low wage
- Alton convicted of GBH

Alton was recently convicted of a serious offence. He has ongoing problems with controlling his anger. He keeps a lot of information secret from his Mum, because of her reactions.

"Without the personalised budget, I don't think this family would have changed. They saw I could really help them and it wasn't just talk

"A school uniform may not sound like much but it made a real difference.

"The uniform made such an effect on her, she really wanted to go back to school."

Alton attends college but his attendance was giving some cause for concern. The college recently discovered the serious nature of his offending and were considering taking action.

College is important for Alton's future and there was a real risk he may give it up altogether.

A tension exists between the traditional approach to youth work with focus on the young offender and the whole family approach of Families First. Youth workers have concerns around working with families, just as some workers may be wary of engaging with young people.

Another key factor is parents will appear hostile to the involvement of the youth offending team. They feel blamed and responsible, and are difficult to engage.

"Personalisation seems to really make a difference. I think it gives the family a bit of faith in what we are trying to do and they start to trust in us!"

"That's key to building a relationship with a family. But it also helps to figure out what's needed to provide a solution."

"When you link that to a purpose it has an impact"

The key worker made a concerted effort to engage with Mum, using the parent support provision within the support team. The worker also initiated a challenging conversation spelling out Alton was at a crossroads in his life. Any decisions he made now would have a significant impact on his life.

The family were struggling financially and Alton had problems recently with his studies. He really needed a computer to help him keep up but had no prospects of affording one. The key worker felt this

might be the key factor that could make a difference and looked into using the personalised budget to purchase a computer.

The personalised budget in Families First must be linked to a purpose. Uncomfortable with just giving a computer outright – the worker made it part of the contract to improve attendance and move away from offending. The computer would be available while ever Alton continued attend college and didn't re-offend.

The family are still being supported but there positive results:

- No re-offending
- Good attendance at college
- Mum starting to look for work

Indicative savings

Cost of NEET £562pa

Cost of arrest £2241

Cost of 6 months custodial sentence £26,437

Case Study 3

- Sinder and Alistair are a couple with 6 children all under 11 years old
- They claim benefits and rent in the private sector
- Police called in response to their arguments
- Neighbours unhappy with the family and concerned about the family's lifestyle

The first visit by the Key Worker revealed the house in a shocking state. There were full black bin liners in every room of the home and graffiti scrawled on most of the walls.

The landlord, unhappy with the overall state of the house and the level of complaints from the neighbours, was considering evicting the family.

The family were also at risk from the effects of welfare reform.

From taking time to understand the family it was clear to the Key Worker that Mum had issues with hoarding and Dad was better carer for the children. Sinder's issues with hoarding were discussed in detail with a therapist. The psychological problems were so deep seated it was important to take an approach which could embed the changes more fully. It was likely to be a slow process where change might not come so quickly.

At this stage the Key Worker felt it would be too much of a risk to use the personalised budget, to help with clearing the house for example. It presented too greater chance of behaviours returning.

Instead there was a renewed focus on the relationship, and the recent arguments and how these might be managed more effectively.

Despite the many issues within the family they are fairly good at budgeting. The Key Worker used this skill to introduce a conversation around the future benefit cap, and how the level of impact this might have. The family felt stuck but are now looking at areas to where they could possibly relocate.

"I didn't go in with a blunt approach – I think it was tried before and it didn't work"

"There are different ways of being persistent and challenging a family's behaviours"

"It was important to keep chipping away and build up the practical skills of the parents"

Results from work with the family:

- Diverted potential eviction
- Sinder's hoarding significantly reduced
- Reduced Police call outs
- House cleared and in much better condition
- Family taking control and looking to move from the area

Indicative savings

Police call out £44

Housing homeless £18,515 pa