

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 24 April 2019

Wards: All

Subject: Keeping young people safe in Merton – executive response and action plan

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director Children Schools and Families

Lead member: Councillor Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services; Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education; Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Contact officer: Julia Regan, Head of Democracy Services, 0208 545 3864

Recommendations:

-
1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission consider Cabinet’s response and the action plan setting out how it proposes to implement the recommendations arising from the joint scrutiny exercise with the youth parliament on the issue of keeping young people safe in Merton – attached as Appendix 1;
 2. That the Commission considers how it wishes to involve young people in scrutiny in the coming municipal year.
-

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. At its meeting on 14 November, the Commission received a report and recommendations arising from a Local Democracy Week event that scrutiny councillors held jointly with youth parliament members in order to give them some experience of the council’s scrutiny processes. The theme of the event, chosen by the youth parliament, was keeping young people safe in Merton.
- 1.2. The Overview and Scrutiny Commission resolved to forward the recommendations to Cabinet. These recommendations and a draft officer response were considered and accepted by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 January. Cabinet agreed to delegate the development of the action plan to the Director of Children Schools and families.
- 1.3. An updated action plan has been attached at Appendix 1 for the Commission’s consideration. This incorporates proposed timescales for initiation or completion of those elements where these can be specified. In some cases, the actions are necessarily ‘ongoing’ (e.g. Recommendations 2 and 5) and specific activities to engage young people in consultation and / or counter negative stereotypes will need to be developed during the course of the year.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Appendix 1 to this report sets out the recommendations made by the Youth Parliament and by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission alongside cabinet’s initial response and the action planned, together with dates and the responsible officer.

In connection with Recommendation 2 particularly, the Commission has an opportunity to specify how it wishes to involve young people in scrutiny during the coming municipal year. Relevant courses of action could include engagement of young people in CYP Scrutiny and / or other Panels or the Commission for specific items. It will also be possible to develop a standalone children's scrutiny event, held once again in local democracy week, to follow on from 2018's successful item on keeping young people safe in Merton.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Young Advisors conducted consultation with 742 local young people aged 11-20. The results were presented to the scrutiny meeting and subsequently to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 14 November 2018.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. This is the first formal response from Cabinet following its consideration of the scrutiny report at its meeting on 14 January 2019.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Delivery of these recommendations can either be met within existing budgets or will be the subject of a bid for support through the council's usual financial procedures.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Cabinet is constitutionally required to receive, consider and respond to scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them at a meeting.
- 7.2. Cabinet is not, however, required to agree and implement recommendations from overview and scrutiny. Cabinet could agree to implement some, or none, of the recommendations made in the scrutiny report.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Appendix 1 – executive response and action plan

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDIX 1

Executive response to the recommendations of the joint scrutiny exercise on keeping young people safe in Merton

Recommendations	Executive response	Timeline	Decision making body and lead officer
<p>Recommendation 1. That the Youth Parliament will continue with making a documentary to raise awareness about crime within the borough.</p>	<p>Accepted The Young People’s Participation and Engagement Manager will continue to support the work of the Youth Parliament and to assist them in making the documentary.</p>	<p>Priority activity for the Youth Parliament in municipal year 2019/20. Documentary release date TBC.</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Children, School and Families</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. That forums of decision makers should consult regularly in order to understand young peoples’ views and to keep up-to-date on their perspectives</p>	<p>Accepted Children and young people in Merton are affected by changes in the borough, whether they are specifically targeted at children and young people or whether they are more general in nature. There is already considerable consultation with children and young people about CSF activity that is targeted towards them. The Director of Children Schools and Families will work with Cabinet, the Merton Partnership and other forums to identify the best way for them use their resources to draw on the views of young people to influence their decision-making, with the intention that children and young people will be recognised as residents of the borough, with as much of an interest in being consulted on all aspects of borough life as adults.</p>	<p>Ongoing activity on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>Cabinet; Merton Partnership; Community Forums; Director of Children, School and Families</p>

Recommendations	Executive response	Timeline	Decision making body and lead officer
<p>Recommendation 3. That schools and youth services will provide a link between young people and decision makers. This should include using school assemblies, workshops and class talks.</p>	<p>Accepted in principle The Young People’s Participation and Engagement Manager will work with schools and youth services to assist them with providing views to decision makers as set out in the response to Recommendations 2.</p>	<p>On election of the new Youth Parliament, for implementation in 2019/20 municipal year.</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Children, School and Families</p>
<p>Recommendation 4. That the Council should work with young people to help them articulate what safe means to them and to understand what safe should look and feel like at home, at school and in the community.</p>	<p>Accepted The Safeguarding Children Board will lead and support further work across the safeguarding partnership to help young people understand and articulate what it means to be safe in Merton.</p>	<p>Part of the ‘contextual safeguarding’ priority of the Merton Safeguarding Partnership, confirmed at the business planning session on 1/3/2019 and for implementation within the 2019/20 Business Plan.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Childrens Board; Director of Children Schools and Families</p>

Recommendations	Executive response	Timeline	Decision making body and lead officer
<p>Recommendation 5. That services work to reduce stereotypes and get to know people before judging them.</p>	<p>Accepted Council services provided to children and young people, or services provided to the public generally, including children and young people, will not make assumptions about young people’s needs and wishes, but will take proactive steps to understand young people as they are. The council will engage with young people as equal residents and citizens of the borough and seek their views at an early stage in policy development and seek feedback on service delivery. The council will set an example through this work to other providers of services in the borough, to show young people as they are and without resorting to stereotypes.</p>	Ongoing.	Cabinet; Director of Children Schools and Families
<p>Recommendation 6. That police officers should invite police cadets to attend events to raise awareness of their role amongst young people. Note – the Overview and Scrutiny Commission suggested that this invitation should also be extended to include fire cadets and other youth groups.</p>	<p>Accepted in principle Director of CSF to raise this with police, fire service and other partners via the Children’s Trust.</p>	For consideration at Children’s Trust Board on 24 April 2019.	Police; Fire Services; Director of Children, Schools and Families

Recommendations	Executive response	Timeline	Decision making body and lead officer
<p>Recommendation 7. That headteachers should ensure that the appointment of new school police officer is announced at school assemblies prior to them taking up the role and should invite them to attend an assembly when they start.</p>	<p>Accepted in principle Director of CSF to raise this with Headteachers via the Headteachers' forums.</p>	<p>For consideration at Secondary Heads Meeting 14 May 2019.</p>	<p>Police; Headteachers</p>
<p>Recommendation 8. That Cabinet consider the role that school governors may be able to take in supporting the recommendations made by the youth parliament</p>	<p>Accepted Scrutiny report to be shared with Chairs of School Governing bodies for consideration.</p>	<p>For consideration at Chair of Governors Meeting 2 May 2019</p>	<p>Cabinet; Director of Children Schools and Families</p>