



Partnership working to tackle gang violence in Birmingham



A report from Overview & Scrutiny





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Preface

By Councillor Keith Barton, Chairman of the Equalities and Human Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Gangs and the violence that surrounds them have blighted our city for some years, culminating in the infamous New Year's shootings in 2003, causing the deaths of Charlene Ellis and Latisha Shakespeare and the wounding of two other young women at a party. They were not the targets but innocent bystanders during an attack between two rival gangs. In the year surrounding that incident there were 27 gang related murders in the City, with all the ramifications that follow.

Prompted by these tragedies it was decided to set up a partnership led mainly by the Police and City Council to bring together the different agencies concerned in the fight against gang violence. There can be no doubt that the efforts of the partnership, Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence, have been successful. Deaths by shooting have dropped significantly, guns have been taken off the streets by successful Police action and high ranking gang members have been apprehended and jailed.

Now is the time to revisit the partnership to ensure that the work that has been done continues and moves on to a different level that will see a greater emphasis on diversions, prevention and providing even more exit opportunities for gang members.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the review group members, Councillors Kane, Spence, Beauchamp, Wagg and Dow and former member Councillor Grundy. The West Midlands Police including Assistant Chief Constable Suzette Davenport, Sergeant Keeley Bevington and Superintendent Tom Coughlan and the long suffering Support Officers: Ruth Mugabe, Harry Barton and Eleanor Roberts. Particular thanks are due to Rebecca Short for her hard work and intelligent handling of a complicated and convoluted subject and special thanks to John Cade for his invaluable help with my first review.

I cannot promise a quick solution to gang violence but a continuing, evolving and active partnership working together to ensure peace and safety on our streets for all our citizens is an essential pre-requisite.



Glossary

BASBU	Birmingham Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
Bliip	Building Lives Intensive Intervention Project
BRGV	Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence
CIRV	Community Initiative to Reduce Violence
E&HR	Equalities and Human Resources
MAGU	Multi Agency Gang Unit
MAPPP	Multi Agency Public Protection Panel
MMAGS	Manchester Multi Agency Gangs Strategy
OCG	Organised Crime Group
SBP	Safer Birmingham Partnership
SSP	Safer Schools Partnership
SVC	Serious Violent Crime
TCFCT	The Centre For Conflict Transformation (formally West Midlands Mediation and Transformation Services)
WMP	West Midlands Police
YOT	Youth Offending Team



Summary

In recent years a number of high profile murders and the accompanying media coverage have ensured the term 'gang' has entered common usage. Gangs are certainly not new to Britain, but the nature and scale of gang culture today is very different to that of previous generations.

In this review we chose to focus on the effectiveness of partnership and multi agency arrangements for tackling gang violence in Birmingham which involved examining the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence (BRGV) work stream of the Safer Birmingham Partnership (SBP).

During the review we heard from City Council officers and external partners involved in the tackling gangs agenda. We also heard from a range of community groups and service users in the hotspot areas targeted by the partnership.

Gangs and gang violence

The issue of gang violence is a national one. However significant problems are restricted to a small number of areas, the majority of which are neighbourhoods in and around the major conurbations of London, Liverpool Manchester and Birmingham. Birmingham itself has a real challenge around violence committed with firearms. In 2006-07, 55% of all non-air weapon recorded firearms offences in England and Wales occurred in just three police authority areas: the Metropolitan Police Service, Greater Manchester Police and West Midlands Police. Currently, West Midlands Police estimate that there are around 400 gang members in Birmingham, of which most are concentrated in the North West of the City.

Government departments, other public sector bodies, think tanks and academics have formulated a variety of definitions of a 'gang' but no single definition has been universally adopted. Most definitions will include some or all of the following aspects: crime and violence, identity, territory and group self-awareness. Wide ranging criminal activity and violence are also defining characteristics of gangs. However, this does not mean that a desire to be involved in crime and violence is usually the motivation for membership, but rather that membership is likely to lead to involvement of individuals in crime and violence.

The term gang for the basis of the review focused on the modern street gang made up of individuals who group together based on local streets, neighbourhoods and identities and have a negative impact on the community and people around them. The focus was also on the public space violence which some of these gangs undertake, usually with an offensive weapon such as a gun or knife and which is visible to the community surrounding it.

The partnership response

The BRGV partnership evolved from the findings of a report into the New Year shootings of Charlene Ellis and Latisha Shakespeare in 2003. The Safer Birmingham Partnership recognised the need for a joined up approach as public violence presents an ongoing challenge not only to the Police but to all other partners. The aim of the BRGV partnership is to eradicate incidents of gang related violence. All interventions aimed at tackling gang violence are considered to ensure they support the strategic aspirations, achieve intended



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outcomes and prevent duplication of effort. Operationally the BRGV partnership exists to enforce the law, reduce harm, protect the community, offer help to those who want it and provide the community with a voice.

The BRGV structure focuses on the three areas to eradicate gang violence; preventing young people entering gangs, targeting and convicting those who continue to take part in gang violence and assisting in an exit route from the gang lifestyle. It is organised into three key workstreams; BRGV1 led by the Police, aims to prevent and deter criminal activity, catch and convict known criminals and resettle and rehabilitate those who wish to exit gang culture. BRGV2 led by the City Council aims to create positive opportunities for young people loosely connected to gangs and develop community and individual resilience to negative gang behaviour. BRGV3 has been established as the critical friend for the partnership, allowing the community to be given a voice and feed back on the BRGV partnership with the aim to improve process and activity.

Mechanisms to achieve these aims include: the use of mediation services to prevent disputes escalating into violence, work in schools to prevent young people being drawn into gangs, improving relationships with the Police and work with community groups to provide diversionary activities for young people.

Findings and conclusions

In terms of success there has been a reduction in violence with gang related murders having reduced from twenty seven in 2002/03 to three in the past four years. Partners within BRGV have achieved some excellent results. Bromford Housing recently won an award for its work with ex-offenders and the Multi Agency Gang Unit (MAGU) can be proud that of the gang members they have worked with, none have gone on to be involved in fatal shootings. Head teachers are confident in tackling the issues within schools and highlight that the partnership, along with Safer Schools Partnerships are increasing levels of trust between schools, the police and the surrounding community.

However in the course of the review partners highlighted such issues as effective partnership working, funding, capacity, communications and relationships with the community. In particular we heard from some community groups who were concerned that the BRGV partnership promises many things but struggles to deliver.

There is now an opportunity for the partnership to evolve further given the ever changing nature of gang culture and the context in which it is operating. The message needs to be reinforced that the partnership approach needs to focus on long term eradication rather than short term offender management, and that this will require committed input from all partners. With Birmingham's situation substantially improving since the problems in 2002/03, we believe the partnership is well placed to implement changes to increase its effectiveness.

As one of the major partners, and leading on the BRGV2 workstream, issues were raised in the course of the review on how best the City Council's contribution could be made. A common denominator here was that it is crucial to have the City Council contribution firmly rooted in the work of the Safer Birmingham Partnership. Carrying this logic through we took the view that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet



Member for Local Services and Community Safety to have portfolio responsibility for operational matters surrounding gangs. Complementary to this, given his overall strategic responsibility for Community Cohesion, it is equally important that the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources maintains his strategic lead role in relation to this agenda and as such be regularly briefed by the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership. As such we would see both the Head of Equality and Diversity remaining on the Executive Board in relation to the strategic role and the Strategic Director of Housing and Constituencies joining the Executive Board.

We also found that equally importantly, BRGV3, which provides feedback from communities, needs to be re-established.

Overall, we believe that tackling gang violence through BRGV has a proven track record. The BRGV partnership is advanced in its approach, but it is not complacent. The partnership needs to be flexible enough to recognise that risk varies from person to person, neighbourhood to neighbourhood and over time. A continued focus on prevention could also produce cost savings to partners. Political commitment to this issue is essential, not just when a critical incident occurs. The message needs to be strong and consistent that gang violence will not be tolerated and there is an exit route for those who wish to take it.



Summary of Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R1	<p>That the City Council's contribution to the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence (BRGV) initiative be aligned more specifically to the work of the Safer Birmingham Partnership. This to be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking the Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety to take portfolio responsibility for the operational work undertaken around gang crime, with the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources maintaining the overall strategic policy lead. • placing the chairing and leadership of the BRGV2 strand of work with the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership • placing the Strategic Director of Housing and Constituencies on the BRGV Executive board • ensuring that the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership regularly briefs the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources given his strategic overview of the community cohesion agenda 	<p>Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources</p>	April 2010
R2	<p>That an early task of the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership be to review the contribution of BRGV2 and specifically report on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the production of clear targets and reporting mechanisms • the capacity of the workstream to deliver • the engagement of all relevant partners / agencies in this work 	Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety	July 2010
R3	<p>On completion of the above review a communications exercise be put in place making clear to stakeholders and communities the contribution and impact of BRGV</p>	Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety	October 2010



R4	That the BRGV partnership finalises the approach to commissioning and capacity building community groups and appoints an appropriate organisation to facilitate this, if necessary.	BRGV Executive board	October 2010
R5	That the BRGV3 workstream is rebuilt, beginning with the appointment of a new chairperson, to ensure the community voice is heard and to ensure the community is part of the solution to the gang problem in the city.	BRGV Executive board	August 2010
R6	That BRGV partners are made aware that their own complaints procedures can and should be used in dealing with complaints relating to BRGV activities. Any complaints should also be fed back to the BRGV Executive.	BRGV Executive Board	August 2010
R7	That the Integrated Youth Service is brought into the BRGV partnership, taking a lead role in the prevention agenda, and with a role in BRGV2 and a place on the Executive Board.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	August 2010
R8	That the Police and City Council ensure that the community and in particular young people are involved in discussions to inform the planning and delivery of services through mechanisms such as BRGV3 and the Total Place agenda.	Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2010
R9	That the Safer Birmingham Partnership Executive Board, with support from the Youth Crime strategic Group, examines how the programme of Safer Schools Partnerships can be funded and extended.	Chair, Safer Birmingham Partnership	October 2010
R10	That through the Youth Offer, local community groups providing diversionary activities are identified, pupils made aware and encouraged to take part in these, particularly in hotspot areas of gang activity.	Cabinet Member, Children Young People and Families	October 2010
R11	That the BRGV partnership looks at the viability of implementing new schemes taking account of good practice elsewhere including:	BRGV Executive Board	October 2010



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	<p>a) using local role models as mentors in schools for 'at risk' young people, following the Manchester example</p> <p>b) holding 'call ins' for known current gang members actively participating in crime to highlight dangers of lifestyle and available alternative options, following the Glasgow example</p> <p>c) providing a point of contact for those who wish to exit the gang lifestyle, following the Glasgow example</p>		
R12	That the BRGV partnership encourages programmes such as the Future Jobs Fund and Urban Living apprenticeships to provide support for gang members looking to leave the lifestyle and find employment and for those at risk of joining gangs.	BRGV Executive board	October 2010
R13	Progress on the above recommendations should be presented to the Equalities and Human Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November 2010. Subsequent updates will be scheduled thereafter. When the committee is satisfied with the rebuild of the partnership, tracking to be handed over to the Local Services and Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	BRGV Executive board	November 2010



1 The review programme

Introduction

1.1.1 We chose to investigate the issues around tackling gang violence following a presentation at the Equalities and Human Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee around the prevalence of gangs in the City and the work of the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence (BRGV) partnership. We considered this topic would benefit from being looked at in greater details. The review group focused on the following question:

“How effective is the multi agency partnership approach to reducing gang violence in Birmingham?”

Method of investigation

1.1.2 We met formally between March 2009 and September 2009 to receive evidence. A record of these meetings is available on the ‘Democracy in Birmingham’ pages of the council website. We highlighted several key lines of enquiry for investigation, including the features of the BRGV partnership, how the council works with BRGV partners, the views of communities and what more could be done to tackle gang violence. The terms of reference for the review can be found in Appendix 1.

1.1.3 Over the course of the review we gathered evidence from a range of sources. This included receiving briefings from internal and external partners and undertaking visits to community groups. A list of those involved can be found in Appendix 2. A brief study was undertaken on what makes an effective partnership; this can be found in Appendix 3. The report is compiled based upon the evidence provided and other background information listed at the end of this report, in Appendix 4.

Report structure

1.1.4 Section 2 outlines the national and Birmingham specific context in which gang violence operates. From this, we begin to see that Birmingham’s situation is rather one of gun violence than knife violence and understand the turning point of the New Year shootings in 2003 in bringing authorities together to tackle violent gangs. This section also outlines the current issues which could have an effect on the future of Birmingham’s gangs and the BRGV partnership which is tackling them.

1.1.5 The BRGV partnership is made up of several workstreams and a wide range of partners. It sits within the framework of the Safer Birmingham Partnership (SBP) and must feed into this. An



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explanation of the development, structure and methods of the BRGV partnership can be found in Section 3.

- 1.1.6 Section 4 introduces some of our findings, focusing mainly on whether the partnership has been achieving its intended outcomes and reducing gang violence across the city. It also looks at the practices of some other Local Authorities and their achievements in order to provide a comparison of effectiveness.
- 1.1.7 Section 5 outlines our findings based upon the opinions of those who work with and in the partnership, as well as those based in the neighbourhoods most affected. Evidence gathering sessions gave a mixed response with regards to the partnership, highlighting particular areas where work should be commended and other areas where there was room for improvement.
- 1.1.8 By examining and taking into consideration the above sections, Section 6 attempts to establish how effective the partnership has been to date and what more can be done to make the BRGV partnership even more effective. This has been divided into several themes to reflect the work within BRGV; leadership, preventing young people entering gangs, targeting those within gangs and assisting those who wish to exit the gang lifestyle.



2 Context: Understanding the challenges

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In recent years, a number of high profile murders and the accompanying media coverage has ensured that the term 'gang' has entered common usage, but there is no common consensus on what it actually means. Violent gangs should be distinguished from other young people who may congregate together in the street and embark on minor criminal activity such as vandalism, but for whom crime is not intrinsic to identity and activity.¹

2.1.2 As well as understanding the meaning of a gang, in assessing the effectiveness of the partnership it is important to understand the environment it has developed in and is operating in. This involves looking at both the national and local context in which we see gangs operate. Birmingham mirrors the development and existence of gangs nationally, but a key difference is the City's challenging gun crime problem.

2.2 Identifying the problem

2.2.1 Government departments, other public sector bodies, think tanks and academics have formulated a variety of definitions of a 'gang' but no single definition has been universally adopted. Most definitions of gangs will include some or all of the following aspects;

- crime and violence
- identity and group self-awareness
- territory

2.2.2 The paper 'Dying to Belong', produced by the Centre for Social Justice in February 2009, summarises various suggestions into a single definition of a gang, which it recommends is adopted by all agencies involved in tackling the issue. It outlines that a gang is;

A relatively durable, predominantly street based group of people who (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernable group (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence (3) identify with or lay claim over territory (4) have some form of identifying structural feature and (5) are in conflict with other, similar, gangs²

¹ Hallsworth, J & Young, T, (2006) The Pyramid of Risk, London Metropolitan University,

² The Centre for Social Justice (2009) 'Dying to belong. An in depth review of street gangs in Britain'



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2.2.3 Those who we would consider belong to gangs can also be placed into particular categories. The following diagram and descriptions are taken from Hallsworth and Young, who classify gangs in a pyramid of risk. This method of identifying gangs is widely used by agencies as a basis for understanding the problems and developing interventions.



The Organised Crime Group (OCG)

- Crime is a business considered as a vocation. Typically own and control means of illegal production.
- Membership may be based on family or ethnic lines but individuals may co-operate together in a particular criminal enterprise
- Those involved in drug distribution are likely to be armed and carry guns. Violence or a capacity for it can be mobilised as a way of accumulating a viable male identity.

The street gang

- Typically a mutation of a peer group, falling mainly into one of two types: the territorial fighting unit and the entrepreneurial street gang. Rarely well organised and are often volatile and short lived.
- Members may be affiliated with older criminals or OCGs who use them to 'run' drugs. Likely to be armed and the weapon most used is likely to be a knife.
- Violence may occur as a consequence of group rivalries.

The peer group

- Affiliation of people who share common history or biography. Will most likely congregate in public spaces but crime and violence is not intrinsic to identity or practice
- Involvement in crime is usually low level and would include underage drinking, fighting, drug use, upsetting the adult world by congregating in ways perceived as threatening.



- Unlikely to look for trouble but will respond if threatened by more violent groups.

2.2.4 Although patchy, the quantitative and qualitative data available in Britain coupled with evidence from American studies does provide insight into the type of person involved in a gang and why they are involved. Academic research and anecdotal evidence reveal a number of characteristics and experiences that appear common amongst gang members:

- Age: Most young people in gangs are thought to join between the ages of twelve and fourteen, although the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey found gang members as young as ten. The upper age range of gang members is usually around the mid- to late- twenties.
- Gender: 98 per cent of gang members identified by the government's Tackling Gangs Action Programme were male.³ Girls do, however, play a number of ancillary roles in gangs, including acting as carriers, holding and hiding weapons and drugs, and can often be found on the peripheries of gangs, for example as girlfriends.
- Ethnicity: Overall, the ethnicity of gang members tends to reflect the ethnicity of the population living in that area. Hence gang members in Glasgow and Liverpool are predominantly white, whereas gang members in Manchester and London are predominantly black. The higher proportion of black gang members overall reflects the disproportionate presence of black communities in deprived inner city neighbourhoods.
- Education: The majority of gang members either play truant or are officially excluded from school. This is perhaps unsurprising given that gangs are street-based and young people not in school are much more likely to be spending large amounts of time unsupervised on the streets.

2.2.5 There are also a range of risk factors which have been identified as potential motivating factors for young people to join gangs. Many of these are associated with youth offending in general. Many of these factors were cited in our evidence gathering.

- A lack of role models, particularly male role models: Young people may look to gang members as role models as they seem to be very successful, they have the 'respect' of others and earn money. Young people may also look up to gang elders for approval and protection.
- Rejection of the educational experience: A failure to engage is felt to restrict young people's horizons and opportunities, leading them to spend time on the streets instead of in school and with few opportunities to make a gainful living through legitimate means.
- Poverty and lack of employment: Inequality, lack of opportunity and poverty can be conducive to thwarted aspirations, and involvement in gangs and criminal activity can be understood, amongst other things, as a way of satisfying aspirations for material things.⁴

³ Dawson, P (2008) 'Monitoring data from the Tackling Gangs Action Programme' Home Office, page 4

⁴ Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (2009) 'Young people, knives and guns: A comprehensive review, analysis and critique of gun and knife crime strategies' page 7



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- Fear: A significant proportion of gang members are not so out of choice, but because they live in areas dominated by gangs and join gangs because they see it as a means of self defence and protection.⁵

2.2.6 These factors alone do not fully explain gang membership, and it is fruitless to try to predict, based on a list of risk factors, whether a young person will join a gang or not. Not all gang members have been exposed to these risk factors, and not all young people exposed to them will become gang members. Nonetheless, combinations of these factors can, and often do, put young people at a higher risk of becoming involved in gangs.

2.3 Gang violence and crime

2.3.1 Wide ranging criminal activity and violence are defining characteristics of some modern street gangs. However, this does not mean that a desire to be involved in crime and violence is usually the motivation for membership, but rather that membership is likely to lead to involvement of individuals in crime and violence.

2.3.2 In its Action Plan for Tackling Violence 2008-2011, the Home Office identifies gang violence as a form of *public space violence*, defined as;

‘Violence that primarily takes place in public, frequently by, among or targeted at groups of people. These crimes are usually committed by individuals who are not intimately known to each other. The majority of offenders and victims in these crimes are men.’⁶

The street is the most common location of instances of public space violence. This is as opposed to *private space violence*, which often takes place in the home and is between individuals who have or have had some form of relationship.

2.3.3 Not all cases of street or public violence are related to gangs and it is often very difficult to separate the two. Similarly links between gun crime and gang activity are not always clear. It may be easy to produce a general figure on the number of gun crimes but understanding how many are gang related is difficult. Nonetheless, possession and use of weapons is known to be high amongst gang members. The NEW-ADAM project found that gang members were two to three times more likely to have been involved with weapons (especially guns) than non-gang members.⁷

2.3.4 There is a strong link between violence and the concept of ‘respect’ amongst gang members; to be feared is to be respected. Violence is also self-perpetuating- to maintain a reputation, a gang or an

⁵ Pitts, J (2007) ‘Reluctant gangsters; Youth Gangs in Waltham Forest’ Chapter 6

⁶ Home Office (2008) ‘Saving Lives, reducing harm, protecting the public. An action plan for tackling violence 2008-11’, page 9

⁷ Bennett, T & Holloway, K (2004), ‘Gang membership, drugs and crime in the UK’ *British Journal of Criminology*, 44, 3, page 317



individual must retaliate to an incident. Whereas gang violence in the past was more directly linked to the drugs trade, violence is now more commonly triggered by 'disrespecting' an individual gang member, or by disrespecting a gang for example by entering their territory if you are from a rival gang's territory.

2.4 The national and local perspective

2.4.1 Most commentators on the modern gang trace its origins to the 1980s, a time of rising unemployment, the decline of industry, and increasing inequality. Young people were particularly hard hit by unemployment; between 1984 and 1997, employment amongst 16-24 year olds decreased by almost 40%. Without employment, some young people looked elsewhere for income and a sense of identity and purpose.

2.4.2 Gang culture became an alternative society for some young people who felt that mainstream society did not offer them ways to make a living, earn respect and status, or feel any sense of belonging. According to the report by the Centre for Social Justice,

'A desire for status, material wealth and sense of belonging are key drivers of human behaviour. The difference [between offenders and others] lies in how these are achieved.'⁸

Much of a gang's income was derived from drugs, and much of its activity, including confrontation with other gangs, crime and violence, was rooted in the drugs trade.

The national picture

2.4.3 Things have changed over the past decade; street gangs have become more common and territory has become a part of the gang's identity in itself, focusing more on this and respect than on the drugs trade. There is still a chance of gangs being involved in the drugs trade, but as highlighted earlier street violence is much more likely to occur due to instances of 'disrespect' for an individual or a gang. We have also seen that gang members are less likely to be armed and carry weapons such as guns, choosing to have a weapon delivered to them to carry out a crime, and passing this weapon on once it has been used. These weapons are often passed around many times, making them more difficult to locate.

2.4.4 More serious problems around violent gangs currently tend to be restricted to a small number of areas, the majority of which are neighbourhoods in and around the major conurbations of London, Liverpool and Manchester and our City.⁹ In 2006-07, 55% of all non-air weapon recorded firearms

⁸ Centre for Social Justice (2009) 'Dying to belong. An in depth review of street gangs in Britain', page 35

⁹ Home Office (2008) 'Tackling gangs: A practical guide for Local Authorities, CDRPs and other local partners' page 94



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offences in England and Wales occurred in just three police authority areas: Metropolitan Police Service, Greater Manchester Police and West Midlands Police.¹⁰

2.4.5 Members of gangs are getting younger, and these young people now compete to prove themselves. Furthermore, the arrest of senior gang members can leave a vacuum near the top of the hierarchy, which younger members compete to fill. Notions of street credibility and 'respect' can become very significant to children who lack, or feel they lack, legitimate access to other ways of achieving status.¹¹ These factors have combined to make instances of gang violence increasingly random and sporadic.

Birmingham

2.4.6 A turning point for Birmingham was the 1980s, when a variety of gangs emerged with links to the drugs trade. The two most well-known gangs are the Burger Bar Boys and the Johnson Crew, both named after the fast food restaurants where there were formed. In the late 1990s, the reputation and violence of these gangs began to grow and offending became more chaotic. By the early 2000s, gang violence had evolved from drug-related assassinations to violence related to issues highlighted previously around respect, revenge and revenue.

2.4.7 In 2003, West Midlands Police had the highest armed call out rate in the country, and there were 27 gang related murders in Birmingham in 2002/3. The violence between the city's two main rival gangs was felt to have reached a peak with the murders of Charlene Ellis, aged 18, and Latisha Shakespeare, aged 17 in January 2003. They were accidental victims of a shooting that was motivated by revenge for a previous killing.

2.4.8 The loss of these two young women, and the legacy this had for Birmingham's gangs, are a reflection of the current national situation regarding 'modern' gangs. After the murders, the national press began to write about the two gangs and their names gained weight. In the months following the New Year's shooting trial, around 80 senior gang members were arrested. Whilst this was very effective in many ways, and a thoroughly necessary action, it left gaps that younger members tried to fill by defending their 'territory' and earning respect through violence. The Director of Young Disciples (a community organisation working with young people in Lozells) told the working group of the Centre For Social Justice's report '*Dying to Belong*' that

'After the girls got shot, because at that time young people were still able to go into other postcodes freely, even though they might have issues – after the girls got shot, the young people decided that the days of allowing other people to

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2009, 'Young People, Knives and Guns. A comprehensive review, analysis and critique of gun and knife crime strategies', page 7



come into our areas was done. Because if that structure was in place, the girls wouldn't have got shot...so they set up these territorial structures...' ¹²

2.4.9 Currently, West Midlands Police estimate that there are about 400 gang members in Birmingham; most of these are concentrated in the North West of the City. These gangs have been the focus of targeted activity to date. ¹³ A number of splinter gangs have developed over the past decade or so, allying themselves loosely to the City's two major gangs. In addition according to the Home Office and highlighted through evidence gathering, there is evidence that criminal gangs of Asian origin are emerging in other parts of the City. ¹⁴

2.5 Current issues

The impact of the recession

2.5.1 Although open to interruption from variables such as the use of intelligence led policing, crime levels and the economy do have a relationship. Birmingham is facing tough pressures in the face of the economic downturn and must be prepared to tackle issues in a more difficult climate.

2.5.2 We felt that the theory of 'anomie' goes a long way to explain the relationship between gang activity and the economy. This represents the contradiction where society promotes goals such as wealth, power and material gains but fails to provide the opportunities to attain them. A strain then forms between the 'haves' and 'have nots' which often manifests itself in violence. Gang leaders reportedly have the respect, relative wealth and power not perceived to be available – or at least attainable – via mainstream life within the local community. ¹⁵

2.5.3 As noted previously, commentators linked the rise of the modern gang to a period of rising unemployment in young people, the decline of industry and increasing inequality. There is potential therefore that the downturn could alter or exacerbate the problems the BRGV partnership is facing. Birmingham has a much higher level of unemployment than the national average - in July 2009 the city had a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 12.3%, the highest for over a decade, and well above the national average. The recession has impacted particularly harshly on young people. Between October 2008 and July 2009, youth unemployment (those aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance) increased from 17.7% to 23.1%; the overall unemployment rate increased by 3.3% to 12.3% during the same period. ¹⁶

¹² Centre for Social Justice (2009) 'Dying to belong. An in depth review of street gangs in Britain', page 87

¹³ Home Office (2008) 'Tackling gangs: A practical guide for Local Authorities, CDRPs and other local partners' page 17

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Safer Birmingham Partnership Strategic Assessment 2009/10, page 13

¹⁶ Figures taken from a report presented to E&HR Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15th September 2009 around worklessness and equalities.



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2.5.4 Unemployment is expected to continue increasing even after recovery begins, and the expectation is that young people could be particularly vulnerable. The on-flow of school leavers into the labour market at the end of the academic year is likely to worsen the situation. Employment opportunities are likely to reduce, and a lack of alternatives could impact negatively on the motivation of those wishing to reform. It has been suggested that gang activity could continue due to lack of legitimate opportunities to achieve socially promoted goals within disadvantaged areas.

2.5.5 In addition, the Head of Equality and Diversity commented that the nature of gang activity was changing due to the recession and unusually gangs from different ethnic groups now had to contact each other to conduct business. The boundaries of gang activity are therefore changing as the recession continues to impact.

Recent events nationally and locally

2.5.6 Over the course of the review issues around gangs and gang violence continued to be highlighted nationally:

- The Prime Minister highlighted the continuing problem of guns and gangs in his speech at the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Conference, to coincide with the release of the government's updated crime strategy 'Cutting Crime – Two Years on'. The work of partners was highlighted in respect of action to tackle gun and knife supply and graphic education campaigns. Especially highlighted was the use of civil injunctions for gang members.
- A report was published by the Home Affairs Committee¹⁷ which highlighted the prevalence of young people carrying knives and also referenced the use of guns, particularly in Birmingham and Manchester. The report recommended that more work be done with prisoners and young offenders and supported strong police action.
- Channel Four presented a review of the Street Weapons Commission report one year since its recommendations. Headed by Cherie Booth QC, the Commission looked at the issues around gun, knife and gang crime and highlights that little has been done since the commission made its proposals, some of which included the an audit of prevention provision in national hotspots for gun and knife crime and recognising the value of Youth Services in tackling this issue.

2.5.7 In addition, the following occurred locally:

- A report to the Cabinet Member for Housing was produced entitled 'Supporting people: Young men at risk of gun and gang crime'. The purpose of this document was to move forward a proposal to provide a housing related support service for young men at risk, wishing to exit gun and gang culture. BRGV would be involved in this as the agency referring users to the scheme. BRGV identified the need to develop this kind of support service to assist communities.

¹⁷ Home Office Home Affairs Committee (2009) 'Knife Crime' Seventh report of session 2008-09



- An anti gang scheme, Building Lives: Intensive Intervention Project (Bliip), was introduced which has the backing of Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police and the Youth Justice Board. This project identifies young people of 10-19 years old who are at risk of joining gangs and aims to provide a bespoke development plan for each individual combining both educational qualifications and extra curricular activities. Paid for by the governments Youth Taskforce, the scheme has funding for 50 people per year for two years.
- At Cabinet Committee (Procurement) a contract was awarded to West Midlands Mediation and Transformation (now known as The Centre For Conflict Transformation: TCFCT) Services to provide a high risk conflict resolution service for Birmingham, which would respond to reports of escalating tension among gangs and help gang members who have expressed an interest in leaving gang culture. Funding is for two years initially, commencing August 2009, followed by another two if funding can be secured and performance requirements are met.¹⁸ A further report was provided to Cabinet in March regarding funding for this service.
- Attention was given to the release of the film '1day'; a gang related film which was filmed in Birmingham. It has caused much debate and faced criticism for glamorising gang culture and therefore possibly encouraging youngsters to join gangs.

The impact of the total place agenda

2.5.8 During evidence gathering for this review, a 'guns and gangs' pilot was selected as a project for the Total Place agenda. Total Place is a national initiative which aims to bring partners across an area together to:

- a. Identify efficiency savings
- b. Find ways of collaborative working between partner agencies
- c. Put citizens at the heart of better service delivery

2.5.9 The pilot should provide a more coherent understanding of the city wide resources that are directed at 'gang vulnerable' individuals, and identify more efficient ways of investing. Specifically it focuses on early intervention. The objectives match closely the objectives of the wider Total place agenda and include:

- Analysis of citywide resources for the guns and gangs agenda
- Calculate the cost savings of preventative measures
- Design and deliver new services that will be more efficient and provide better outcomes
- Develop multi agency working

¹⁸ Procurement Cabinet Committee meeting 22nd June 2009. Report available on 'Democracy in Birmingham' pages of the Council website.



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- 2.5.10 The target group are birth children and siblings of existing gang members, as evidence shows that this group is at high risk of becoming involved in gang related activity. The pilot will map the family trees of gang members, helping BRGV gain a better understanding of the risks posed to children, siblings and other young family members linked to gang members, and develop a model to safeguard young people. An example of how these risks can be mapped was presented at a Police Authority conference on guns and gangs in November 2009. This is shown in appendix 5. The diagram demonstrates very starkly and dramatically how one individual who is involved in crime can set in place a legacy for generations to come. The implications are significant; by removing just one individual from a life of criminal activity, he or she could be prevented from bringing up children into the same lifestyle, and stop the cycle repeating for generations down the line.
- 2.5.11 The pilot should enable informed decision making about the most appropriate stage for intervention. It hopes to explore both existing interventions and look to develop new and innovative ones. New interventions could, for example, identify children as being at risk from the point of conception or birth, and involve educating young women who are sexually active about the risks of being in a relationship with a gang member, both to themselves and to any unborn children.
- 2.5.12 BRGV3 is one of the main stakeholders in this pilot. They will be relied upon to produce the views of the community and create engagement.

Perceptions of gang activity

- 2.5.13 The impact of gang culture can be one of the factors underpinning feelings of community safety and reassurance. By looking at particular opinion survey indicators, taken from the Place and Annual Opinion Surveys¹⁹, we can begin to see a picture of current community opinion about feeling safe, young people and confidence in the ability to tackle crime. Whilst BRGV cannot be solely responsible for affecting these figures, any changes may be indicative of the work of the Police, Council and other agencies.
- 2.5.14 National Indicator (NI) 21 (Percentage of people who believe their council and local police are dealing with local concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour) rates are at 27% (Place Survey). In comparison with Local Authorities in the West Midlands, Birmingham has the highest rate, however with only 27% responding positively there is still much room for improvement.
- 2.5.15 Concerns about young people hanging around on the street can be linked to the prevalence of gangs, or at least to people's level of fear of gangs. There is no clear trend from available opinion survey data, although the reduction in 2006/2007 (38%) from the high of 2005 (52%) may be the beginning of an improvement. Nonetheless it is still worth remarking that over one third of the survey sample perceives young people hanging around on the street to be a problem,

¹⁹ Figures taken from the 2008 Birmingham Citywide surveys



demonstrating that there is a significant need for, amongst other things, diversionary activities to keep these young people occupied.

3 Context: The partnership response

3.1 Introduction

What the city understood was that when you get an incident like the New Year's murders all these authorities collaborate at the same time – why couldn't that be an ongoing process?²⁰

3.1.1 Public violence undertaken by gangs inevitably creates fear amongst residents and communities of Birmingham; this presents an ongoing challenge not only to the Police but to all other partners.

3.1.2 As a result of the findings of a report into the New Years shootings, the Safer Birmingham Partnership recognised the need for a more effective joined up approach to gang violence. As such the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence (BRGV) partnership was created. All interventions aimed at tackling gang violence are considered by the partnership to ensure they support the strategic aspirations, achieve intended outcomes and prevent duplication of effort.

3.1.3 BRGV aims to develop a partnership which contains the key elements of an effective arrangement; shared priorities and values, respect for, and trust between partners and accountability amongst partners. The partnership has been highlighted in central government guidance as good practice for Local Authorities and partners.

3.2 Aims

3.2.1 Until recently the aim of the partnership was to reduce incidents of gang related gun crime year on year. This has been revised and now highlights the need to eradicate gang violence. Operationally the partnership exists to enforce the law, reduce harm and protect the community, and to offer help to those who want it. Other aims include:

- to engage, coordinate and task particular organisations with the delivery of interventions to reduce gang networks and gun related crime
- to devise and implement a control strategy for Birmingham as a whole
- to work with Local Delivery Groups to devise and implement local plans to tackle hot spot locations

²⁰ A comment from a council worker in Heale, J (2008) 'One Blood: Inside Britain's New Street Gangs' Simon & Schuster, page 122



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- to improve public reassurance as regards gun crime across the city and improve the local and national image of Birmingham as a safe city

3.2.2 BRGV can be considered a significant partnership as defined in Appendix 3. Gang violence is classed under Serious Violent Crime (SVC) and as such the BRGV partnership contributes to National Indicator 15 (SVC). However the main indicator BRGV looks to effect is National Indicator 29 (gun crime rate), in which it looks to reduce the total number of gun crimes in Birmingham by 4% year on year. BRGV also works to a Local Indicator around the number of Birmingham gang related gun crimes. This includes such measures as the number of injuries requiring medical attention and the number of gang related offences using weapons.

3.2.3 As well as reducing gang violence and crime in real terms, BRGV aims to work with the community to build resilience to gangs and gang culture. Indicative progress can be taken from such measures as:

- an increase in the number of individuals positively engaged in contributing to countering youth violence
- an increase in the number of community groups involved in peer education projects and programmes
- increase in the number of gang affiliated young people in community enterprise or service
- faith communities positively engaging in addressing and contributing to tackling youth related violence

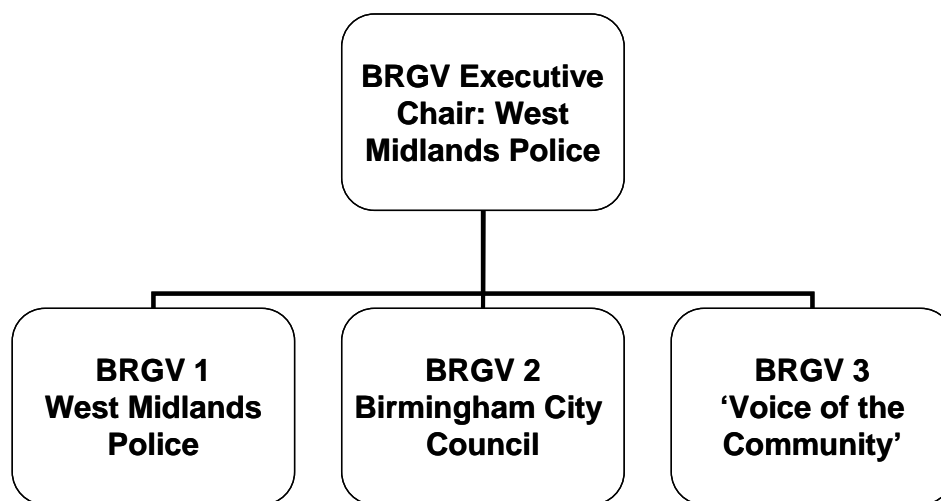
3.3 Structure

3.3.1 The BRGV structure focuses on the three areas; preventing young people entering gangs, targeting and convicting those who continue to take part in gang activity and in providing an exit route from the gang lifestyle. Structurally the approach fits in with national good practice, reinforced in the Governments 'Tackling Gangs' paper:

The problem needs to be addressed by a range of partners and tactics, including working with young people to prevent them from joining gangs, engaging the community to resist gangs and supporting young people to leave gangs²¹

3.3.2 In terms of staffing, BRGV has one full time officer who co-ordinates activities on behalf of BRGV. It is organised into three key workstreams, headed up by an Executive Board. This Executive Board contains the chairs of each BRGV workstream and other major partners, including; Youth Offending Service, Government Office West Midlands and Constituency representatives.

²¹ Home Office (2008) 'Tackling gangs: A practical guide for Local Authorities, CDRPs and other local partners' page 2



BRGV partnership structure

- 3.3.3 BRGV1 is Police led, chaired by West Midlands Police (WMP) and seeks to use mechanisms to prevent the criminal activity of gangs by catching, convicting, reducing risk and managing critical incidents (for example a shooting). It includes such partners as Probation services, Birmingham Anti Social Behaviour Unit (BASBU) and representatives from Council directorates.
- 3.3.4 BRGV2 is led by the City Council and aims to work with a range of agencies, voluntary sector organisations and individuals to provide targeted help where needed. This should be done in conjunction with BRGV1 who identify where these services need to be targeted. This strand of work also aims to protect key groups from negative gang activity and empower the community to take back responsibility for its vitality and young people.
- 3.3.5 The final workstream, BRGV3, is community led. It acts as a platform for communities to provide feedback and is considered an independent advisory group. Members of the community are both directly and indirectly involved.
- 3.3.6 The partnership itself sits under and feeds into the wider structure of the Safer Birmingham Partnership (SBP) and its strategic areas. These areas include:
- **Local Delivery:** Develops local community activity in response to local priorities and engages communities in developing neighbourhood approaches and increases public reassurance. This involves working with constituencies.
 - **Performance Management:** Oversees operational delivery and ensures success against community safety priorities.
 - **Learning and Development:** Two strands, one focusing upon the requirements of the partnership and one on the developing agenda for the partnership, which examines future approaches to work, through such things as think tanks.



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- 3.3.7 Each of the work streams of BRGV has been mapped to these strategic areas. For example BRGV2 contributes to the Local Delivery strategic area, while BRGV1 contributes to the Performance Management strand.
- 3.3.8 Current activity is funded mainly through the Safer Birmingham Partnership which provides just over half of the £1 million cost of interventions per year. BRGV also receives funding from Central Government and through Positive Action for Young People. The majority of funding is allocated to BRGV1. It can then direct funding to where it is most needed with a large amount being directed towards conflict resolution and transformation. The next largest spend is on wrap around services for both Adults and Juveniles.

3.4 Mechanisms to tackle gang violence

- 3.4.1 The BRGV partnership grounds an understanding of gangs on the Hallsworth and Young pyramid of risk, detailed earlier. WMP also include some local definitions for operational purposes covering the use of a name/badge/emblem and the use or suspected use of firearms. The Chairs of both BRGV1 and BRGV2 attended evidence gathering to outline the work that was undertaken, highlighting the following;

Preventing and deterring gang membership

- 3.4.2 Mechanisms used in order to prevent criminal activity developing include:
- High risk conflict management: BRGV1 work with TCFCT in the provision of this service. TCFCT were established in 2004 and train individuals to facilitate dialogue between those engaged in gang related violence. Referrals to the service come from the Police, the community, the prison service and the City Council. These trained mediators work with known gang members in high risk situations, to try and provide either a way out of the gang lifestyle or resolve issues between gang members which could potentially escalate into an incident of violence.
 - Civil injunctions: One of the methods BRGV1 was able to use in the past was civil injunctions. This would prevent a person entering a particular area or wearing a particular type of clothing etc. The Court of Appeal had concluded that Local Authorities did not have sufficient powers to continue with further actions, but the recent Policing and Crime Act allows these injunctions to begin again.²²
 - Working with schools: Work is undertaken with BRGV partners and schools to identify children at risk of joining gangs. Periodic meetings are held with Head teachers and are chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families. Selected schools are also represented in BGRV1 meetings, although the relationship with some schools is just evolving. The Police also work with schools through Safer Schools Partnerships in which a Police officer

²² Policing and Crime Act 2009, can be found at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09/policingandcrime.html>



is based within a school to help build relationships with pupils, parents and the wider community.

- Working with the voluntary sector: BRGV2 works with a range of agencies, voluntary sector organisations and individuals to seek solutions within communities. BRGV has chosen to work with community organisations as they have credibility within the community and could have a more powerful impact than public service agencies.

Catching and convicting known gang members

3.4.3 The focus of this area falls mainly with BRGV1 and WMP. WMP internally restructured to create specific teams to target high risk gang members. The work includes undertaking operations to arrest and manage the few critical incidents that do occur in the city and ensure communities are confident to report incidents to the police. They receive the support of BRGV2 in terms of victim and witness support.

Exiting gangs and rehabilitation

3.4.4 This is the area in which most of the resources are spent after an offence has been committed. In terms of resettling and rehabilitating known gang members, the following methods are used:

- Multi Agency Public Protection Panels (MAPPPs): This arrangement involves a wide variety of agencies coming together to provide the best opportunities for gang members to exit the gang lifestyle. The support of this arrangement required the development of a Multi Agency Gang Unit (MAGU). This is a dedicated, co-located multi agency team which has been established to manage offenders who are involved in gang culture. The team includes people from the Police, Birmingham Anti Social Behaviour Unit (BASBU), Youth offending and Probation services. They provide solutions to tackling negative behaviours and promote alternative lifestyles to aid exiting gang culture. The MAGU has allowed considerable knowledge to be built up by partners. This team is currently handling around 80 cases involving gang members, many of whom were in custody.
- BRGV2: As with the prevent and deter strand of work, provides support and works with agencies, in particular mentoring is provided through community groups.



4 Findings: Measuring effectiveness

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 BRGV adds value across a range of themes and indicators. However concurrent activities between BRGV, the partnership agencies and other partnerships and initiatives make it hard to tease out the impact of BRGV itself. In addition to this, much information has to be professionally examined case by case to identify if it is gang related.
- 4.1.2 In measuring the effectiveness of the partnership it is useful to look at the available facts and figures that surround gang related violence, showing whether the partnership is achieving its goals in real terms. We also recognise the importance of learning from elsewhere and looking at the approaches of some other partnerships and authorities.

4.2 Has Gang Violence decreased?

- 4.2.1 WMP highlighted that in terms of success there had been a reduction in real terms with gang related murders having reduced from twenty seven in 2002/03 to three in the past four years. Coinciding with the period of time when BRGV really took force, this is one of the clearest measures to show that the BRGV partnership is effective in reducing gang and gun crime. This is confirmed by NI29 (gun crime) figures which show a reduction in gun related incidents in the 12 months preceding October 2008. With regards to the Local indicator for reducing gang violence, the picture is unclear as the indicator is still in development.
- 4.2.2 During the period in which BRGV was able to use civil injunctions to tackle gang violence, results were extremely positive and it was clear that they were helping to reduce gang violence. It was reported during evidence gathering that the difference experienced by communities was a notable absence of gangs from the streets, reported by local neighbourhood police teams in residential areas and the city centre.
- 4.2.3 The impact that the MAGU has had is notable. Of the offenders that this unit has managed, we heard that there were no gang related fatal shootings involving those high risk individuals supervised under their arrangements. In addition Bromford Housings Mentoring Support Service recently won the Groundbreaking Service Team of the Year award at the Inside Housing and Chartered Institute of Housing national awards. The service provides help to serious offenders on their release from prison with such things as finances, education, employment and housing. We were informed that those they have helped have not returned to their gang lifestyle.



4.3 How else does BRGV contribute?

- 4.3.1 Debate exists over the level of assistance gang members should receive particularly through work such as the resettle and rehabilitate aspect of BRGV. A criticism that has been levelled at this type of scheme is that it spends money on 'rewarding' criminals. However, the cost of rehabilitation and of the work of such partnerships as BRGV need to be offset against the economic and social costs that are saved. Below are some of the figures which reflect the cost of crime in the worst case.²³
- Homicides can cost £1,479,000 with attempted murder costing over half a million pounds.
 - Criminal use of a firearm can cost £169,000
- 4.3.2 In November 2008, the Secretary of State for Justice reported to the House of Commons that the overall average resource cost per prisoner in England and Wales in 2007-08 was £39,000.²⁴ This excludes the cost of healthcare and education. In comparison, a support provider offering help with things such as housing, employment and education to ex-gang members costs £3,320 per person per year.
- 4.3.3 The most recent Ministry of Justice figures on re-offending show an average rate of 39% for 2007. The majority of adult gang members who are jailed will be aged under 30 so it is significant that re-offending rates for all age groups under 30 are higher than the average. The re-offending rate for 18-20 years olds was 48.3%; for 21-24 year olds it was 41.3%; and for 25-29 year olds was 42.4%.²⁵ The government calculated that a re-offending prisoner was likely to be responsible for crime costing the criminal justice system an average of £65,000, with prolific re-offenders costing significantly more.²⁶
- 4.3.4 Looking at the figures above it is clear that in addition to the social and emotional benefits to society, there is an economic case for rehabilitating gang members. The cost of working intensively with a gang member to transform their life and help them to get out of the cycle of prison and re-offending is considerably lower than the cost of keeping them in prison. In looking at the economic costs, since 2002-03 over £38 million could have been spent on dealing with gang related murders and incidents.
- 4.3.5 The notion of rewarding crime was raised in discussion with the Head of Housing Needs, as to whether the accommodation support offered to ex gang members would adversely impact those on the waiting list for a council property. We were advised that all Local Authorities have a target to reduce offending, and accommodation is one way that can be achieved. Allocation schemes for housing in all Local Authorities would include a mechanism to provide that accommodation so as to support those wishing to rebuild their lives and to support communities.

²³ Figures taken from the Police Authority conference on gangs, held at the Tally Ho Conference Centre, Birmingham, 13th November 2009

²⁴ House of Commons Hansard written answers for 25th November 2008

²⁵ Ministry of Justice (2009) 'Reoffending of Adults: results from the 2007 cohort', London: The stationary office

²⁶ Social Exclusion Unit (2002) 'Reducing Re-offending by ex-prisoners' London: Social Exclusion Unit, page 5



4.4 How do we compare with other Local Authorities?

4.4.1 Examining the activities of other partnerships ensures that good practice from other areas is used where possible. Examples of good practice taken from the Tackling Gangs Action Plan guidance, some of which Birmingham uses, are listed below.

Kickz Programme

- Aims to use the power of football to engage young people. Targets disadvantaged areas of the country.
- From the end of 2008, 64 projects were delivered in London and 100 nationally
- All Kickz projects are costed at up to £47,500 a year, with costs being allocated to staff and facility hire. From September 2008 all projects receive 50% funding from central allocation and require 50% from local sources

Lewishams Restorative Justice Project

- Specialist officer to intervene early in neighbourhood and community disputes to prevent escalation
- Brings everyone involved together with a trained facilitator. Support is given to those who caused harm while holding them fully accountable
- Members of the community were offered training in conflict resolution
- Funded by New Cross Gate New Deal for Communities and Lewisham Council

Raising parental and carer awareness, Croydon

- The Police and YOT identify at an early stage young people at risk.
- They make home visits to inform parents and carers of the risks of gang association and victimisation. Support through diversion is offered
- The MPS, Croydon YOT, Victim support and Croydon Voluntary Action were involved. No additional costs were incurred over mainstream activities

4.4.2 In particular our attention was drawn to two cases of good practice, one in Manchester and one in Glasgow.

CIRV – Glasgow ²⁷

4.4.3 The Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV – pronounced Serve) is a multi agency initiative aiming to reduce anti social behaviour and violence much like BRGV. They use a focused strategy developed from best practice in America.

²⁷ For more information on this visit <http://www.actiononviolence.co.uk>



- 4.4.4 Gangs, both as an entire group and individual members are invited to take part in a 'call in' where they are presented with two options; adopt a more positive lifestyle or face the full impact of the law. Attendance is voluntary. Present at the call in can be representatives from the community and/or relatives of victims.
- 4.4.5 The invitees are then presented with a card at the end of the session with a phone number to call if they would like to discuss exit strategies.
- 4.4.6 Since CIRV held its first 'call in' session in October 2008, more than 268 gang members have signed up to the initiative. Some as a result of the 'call in', others through word of mouth. It is now involving other areas of the city.

Manchester's mentoring scheme

- 4.4.7 The Manchester Multi Agency Gangs Strategy (MMAGS) team was established in 2001 to provide a unified response to the problem of gangs in the city. The partnership brings together seconded staff from Greater Manchester Police, Manchester City Council's children's services, Manchester Youth Offending Team (YOT) and Greater Manchester Probation, as well as dedicated posts for mentors and outreach workers. Problems revolve around the longstanding Doddington and Gooch gangs, with violence occurring as a result of drugs conflict and both groups trying to establish themselves in the 'marketplace'.
- 4.4.8 Eight 'til Late is a mentoring project that was set up by MMAGS to develop the resilience of boys aged 8 to 11 to gang membership. The project provides support for families and is also closely linked to the Extended Schools programme. Targets include:
- Ensuring that younger siblings and offspring of gang members attend school on a regular basis and are therefore more protected from grooming for gang membership.
 - Engaging young people in positive activities, particularly at peak times of risk, for example evenings, in partnership with schools and statutory voluntary organisations.
 - Trying to engage them in mainstream activities so that they can continue to progress after the mentoring ended.
 - Providing information, advice and guidance to young people, their parents, carers and families
- 4.4.9 One to one and group sessions were held, tackling a wide variety of topics, including doing well at school, bullying, gangs, crime, following rules at home, going into secondary school, anger management, racism and many more.



5 Findings: Views of agencies and the community

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 TCFCT commented during evidence gathering that the cessation of gang related violence was unlikely to be effected without the work of BRGV groups which can be commended for achieving excellent results in reducing violent gang crime despite working in such a difficult environment.
- 5.1.2 We spoke with a wide range of agencies, as well as undertaking visits to several community groups to talk about their experiences. The comments we received were encouraging but some highlighted room for improvement. This section outlines those comments received through evidence gathering.

5.2 Leadership

- 5.2.1 The range of people and services involved in providing information as part of this review is in itself evidence that the partnership is effective in involving a wide range of agencies. It is also testament to the commitment across the city to tackle this issue.
- 5.2.2 We found that while the major lead in BRGV has rightly been the Police, this has resulted in some opinion that it is too Police focused and reactive. In particular it was felt that the BRGV2 arm of the partnership, led by the City Council, was consequently sometimes left in the background. Community groups are keen to address this as they view the City Council as the corporate parent of communities because of the wide range of services and help it provides.
- 5.2.3 Feedback on how the City Council's role is perceived can be summarised as follows:
- BRGV2 is absolutely crucial to the success of the overall agenda but is sometimes perceived as failing to deliver on interventions.
 - With so many services provided through the City Council a lack of single point of contact was highlighted as an issue, particularly by WMP. The Council is often seen as not speaking with one voice, all of the different directorates involved would benefit from greater coordination compared to other organisations. Agencies such as TCFCT said they would look to develop a relationship similar to that which existed with the Police where there were identified contacts for particular issues.
 - Others commented on the need to develop the capacity of the community groups involved in BRGV2. As the key body to engage with communities, it should be responsible for helping community groups to improve. We were encouraged by the involvement of the Creative



Coalition group (C3) who are able to provide this capacity building and help provide support in different areas of work. However, we understand it is still to be decided whether C3 will be formally embedded in the partnership.

- 5.2.4 When we visited community groups there was confusion over the status of BRGV3. Many who were involved in this workstream in the past now consider it is defunct as meetings do not take place and where they do, do not produce any meaningful outcomes. There was also debate over where community groups who provide a service as part of BRGV should be placed in the structure.

5.3 Focus

- 5.3.1 The focus of the partnership on prevention, targeting and exiting, appears to work well and can be evidenced by the achievements of partners within BRGV presented to the review group. However evidence gathering highlighted that the partnership can be too focused on managing problems once they have arisen, rather than focusing more on preventing the problem arising. This is a problem recognised by the partnership and looking to be rectified.
- 5.3.2 A good practice example of an increased focus on prevention, outside of the BRGV partnership, came from the Hodge Hill Constituency. The local Detective Chief Inspector attended evidence gathering and explained the various activities provided to young people as a diversionary measure. In terms of anti social behaviour, some of the Operational Command Units covering Hodge Hill have seen significant improvements.
- 5.3.3 A representative from Probation Services commented that the focus of BRGV was originally to deal with a specific issue brought about by the incidents of 2002/03. The picture in Birmingham currently is different and as such questions were raised about BRGV's ability and preparedness to deal with new emerging gangs in different areas, particularly with younger, more volatile people.
- 5.3.4 The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families made more general comments that BRGV needs to engage more with regeneration services, which would help with prevention e.g. the entire spectrum of the housing agenda, encouraging people in the community to remain rather than aspiring to move away.
- 5.3.5 Employment and training was a recurring cause for concern. Those giving evidence commented that the partnership does not focus enough on getting young people into training and employment. In accordance with the comments of the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, comments were made that young people needed to be included in the development of the community in order to appreciate their local surroundings and respect the area. Discussion with WMP and the Head of Equality and Diversity accepted however, that employers were reluctant to hire offenders and work to build relationships with employers was needed. Consideration was also given to the current economic situation which would impact further on employment initiatives.



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5.3.6 One of the community groups visited commented on the involvement of young people in decision making. The group, in developing their programme of activities, engage with young people to find out what best suits them and what activities they would like to see run. They are then certain that young people would want to be involved in these activities. It was considered that BRGV should be doing something similar, which would in turn enable young people and make them more willing to engage.

5.4 Funding and resources

5.4.1 Almost all who provided evidence mentioned funding as an issue. This was both in the sense that BRGV would not be able to achieve on all of its aims due to funding restrictions, but particularly around those agencies and groups who could provide a valuable service through BRGV were unable to secure funding to allow this to happen. Issues regarding funding fall into several areas

- Short term funding
- Capacity building
- Allocation of funds

5.4.2 With regards to short term funding TCFCT highlighted in particular that agencies and community groups need to spend a lot of time applying for rounds of funding, often on a yearly basis; meaning that their ability to do the actual work is diminished. TCFCT commented that investment in BRGV over a period of three to four years could be helpful and it was accepted that it must be accompanied with firm evidence of what work was undertaken would be required to secure funding.

5.4.3 Compounding the issue of short term funding is the capacity of smaller organisations, often working at community level, to apply for funding. We were concerned that some groups would not have the necessary skill or resources to complete long and complex applications for funding and as such BRGV would be losing out on effective interventions.

5.4.4 Questions were raised, particularly by community groups around the allocation of funding. The perception from community level is that a lot of money is available, but is not directed to grass roots organisations for intervention to be more successful. There was some discontent that larger agencies providing services were the only ones which received funding (although this could be related back to the capacity issue mentioned above). Conversely TCFCT, a large community group in itself, noted that they were lacking resources particularly for mediation in Birmingham and that similar organisations operating in areas such as London and Derby received greater funding. As highlighted in section 2.5.7 TCFCT will now receive further funding.



5.5 Interaction between BRGV partners

5.5.1 It was the opinion of Head teachers who provided evidence that partnership working has been effective in increasing levels of trust between schools, pupils, the community and the Police. Particularly highlighted were Safer Schools Partnerships (SSP) established in schools such as Holyhead in Handsworth. Head teachers mentioned that in the past issues of trust between the police and the community and between the Police and the school had existed. The SSP had achieved improvement in relations and it was evident that attitudes to the police had changed, benefiting the whole community. During the review, Holyhead School in Handsworth received visits from the then Home Secretary and current Secretary for Children, Schools and Families in relation to their Safer Schools Partnership, with latter highlighting that

“We want every school in Birmingham and the country to have a Safer Schools Partnership and Holyhead can be a role model”²⁸

5.5.2 The Director of Constituency Services highlighted the positive engagement between the BRGV partnership agencies and constituencies. There had been engagement with a number of areas including Ladywood, Perry Barr, Hodge Hill and other areas in dealing with gang related activity and large gatherings of young people. The Director of Constituency Services referred to the management of a firearms incident in Ladywood Constituency by the police and reinforced the level of engagement there had been with the community, stakeholders, constituency director and local politicians which had sought to give reassurance. The Constituency Director for Hodge Hill had also worked with the Police through the local delivery group to identify the issue of gun and gang violence as a core priority and the implications of that for tasking of incidents and long term planning.

5.5.3 In general partners tend to work well together and there is a level of trust and co-operation between them. Evidence gathering however highlighted particular tensions between 1) BRGV and community groups / community and 2) the community group themselves:

1. Feedback from community groups highlighted that approaches that have been used by BRGV made the community feel that they were only there to provide intelligence and information and this made them feel like informants. This, coupled with a perceived reluctance by the Police to share real information equally across partners, compounds the problem and increases tension between the Police and those on the ground.

Several community groups we spoke to commented that the relationship with BRGV is imbalanced. One commented that they felt that they were called upon for assistance when a critical incident occurred to help manage a situation e.g. the Lozells riots, but were not utilised any other time. The success that community groups can have in more general day to day

²⁸ ‘Ministers hail school’s success on truancy and crime’, Birmingham Post, 12th May 2009



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activity and especially in preventing young people from entering criminal behaviour was highlighted to us during one particular visit. A group of young people who regularly attend one of the community groups in Lozells take part in a 'creative writing/positive lyrics' programme. This involves creating and producing songs which portray positive images and highlight the opportunities for young people as opposed to the negative and sometimes glamorised issues often expressed in music. We were fortunate enough to meet and talk with some of the young people who had recently been invited to attend a conference in London and perform for delegates.

There was a feeling by some that BRGV lacks focus on the use of local knowledge and experience and local role models. One community group highlighted that on occasions external organisations are brought into the locality to undertake work and remove tasks from the hands of the community group. It was stressed that while they were happy for consultants to take on a supportive role it would be wrong for them to lead on projects as often they might not have the knowledge of the area or its circumstances to implement plans effectively. Another group raised the problem of the partnership not including those who could have most influence in the community. Often some local residents have a degree of respect from the young people in the area and would be best placed to mediate or communicate with them. Alongside this WMP recognised that there were organisations having credibility within the community that could have a greater impact than public service agencies.

We questioned the use of reformed gang members as local role models. It was acknowledged that they could be viewed in the community with suspicion but their presence could demonstrate what could be achieved.

2. A representative from the Creative Coalition (C3) commented that due to the complications around funding, community groups often find themselves working against each other in terms of trying to gain funding, which can lead to tension. Community groups believe that there needs to be a level playing field and fair competition for both small and larger groups. Community groups aren't generally encouraged to work together, with one group which we visited noting that they knew the other groups which were established in their local area, but as yet hasn't contacted them to work jointly.

5.5.4 One of the most strident comments made by a community group was that there has been little success and delivery at street level when so much is promised by BRGV. Because of the lack of impact at street level and feeling that concerns are not listened to, coupled with the point earlier that they consider BRGV3 as defunct, two groups no longer attend BRGV meetings.

5.5.5 Community groups also commented about the imbalance between victim / offender support. Parents highlighted that often young people who committed a gang related crime received intervention measures and are offered a wide range of help, yet the victims of those crimes received very little. Where support had been offered, such as moves in accommodation, on occasion this had not been followed through.



5.6 Communications between BRGV partners

- 5.6.1 BRGV has had difficulties in the past around communications, however these are now being solved through the establishment of protocols in place with the Police on information sharing, ground rules in place for those involved and a risk management process linked to the Police. The Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator and Youth BRGV lead commented on the greater degree of information sharing than has been seen previously and much of that work was being undertaken in and with the support of schools.
- 5.6.2 One of the most prominent points around communication which we heard was the lack of understanding of what BRGV was about. On some occasions witnesses, particularly those in community groups, used terms such as TCFCT and Police interchangeably with BRGV. There appeared to be a lack of understanding about who is involved in BRGV and when. One community group, who is listed as a member of BRGV had only recently learnt that it still existed and had no involvement in it.
- 5.6.3 Although a lot of the information that BRGV holds would be of a sensitive nature, community groups were concerned that the partnership does not appear to be publicised, with particular reference to the 'good news'. Parents in the communities we visited commented in particular that they would like to hear stories of where BRGV has done well, how it has achieved its aims and what the outcomes were.
- 5.6.4 Parents commented that in some cases they had wanted to raise an issue and had contacted several people within BRGV only to be informed that no complaints procedure was in place.



6 Conclusions: What more can be done...

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The City's gangs make fewer headlines, but Birmingham's gang problem is far from eradicated. The Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence (BRGV) partnership has been proven to work well and must be commended for bringing together so many partners to successfully reduce the levels of gang violence in the city. This reflects our belief that a partnership approach is key to tackling gang violence.
- 6.1.2 There is now an opportunity for the partnership to evolve further given the ever changing nature of gang culture and the context in which it is operating. The BRGV partnership has perhaps steered itself towards methods which reflect a manage, catch and convict reaction toward gang violence and crime due to the proactive work of the Police. The message needs to be reinforced that the partnership approach needs to focus on long term eradication rather than short term offender management, and that this will require committed input from all partners. With Birmingham's situation substantially improved since incidents in 2002/03, we believe the partnership is well placed to implement changes to increase its effectiveness.

6.2 ...to improve the partnership structure?

- 6.2.1 The review highlighted some tensions within the BRGV structure. This is perhaps not surprising given the difficult and complex area of work but these tensions need to be addressed by the City Council and the BRGV partnership as a whole.

The Councils contribution to the BRGV agenda

- 6.2.2 As one of the major partners, and leading on the BRGV2 workstream, the role of which is described in paragraph 3.3.4, issues were raised in the course of the review on how best the City Council's contribution could be made. A common denominator here was that it is crucial to have the City Council contribution firmly rooted in the work of the Safer Birmingham Partnership. Placing responsibility with the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership would provide, particularly for the Police, a clear and accountable single contact point to work with.
- 6.2.3 Carrying this logic through we took the view that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety to have portfolio responsibility for operational matters surrounding gangs. Complementary to this, given his overall strategic responsibility for Community Cohesion it is equally important that the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources maintains his strategic lead role in relation to this agenda and as such be regularly briefed by the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership. Both Cabinet Members agree with this approach. As such



we would see the Head of Equality and Diversity remaining on the Executive Board in relation to the strategic overview with the Strategic Director of Housing and Constituencies joining the Executive Board.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R1	<p>That the City Council's contribution to the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence (BRGV) initiative be aligned more specifically to the work of the Safer Birmingham Partnership. This to be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking the Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety to take portfolio responsibility for the operational work undertaken around gang crime, with the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources maintaining the overall strategic policy lead. • placing the chairing and leadership of the BRGV2 strand of work with the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership • placing the Strategic Director of Housing and Constituencies on the BRGV Executive board • ensuring that the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership regularly briefs the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources given his strategic overview of the community cohesion agenda 	<p>Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources</p>	April 2010

6.2.4 This alignment with the work of the Safer Birmingham Partnership should be accompanied by a stock take of the work of BRGV2 to ensure clear intended outcomes and the capacity to deliver alongside the other workstreams. We would expect to see these targets incorporated into the wider delivery plan for BRGV setting out the steps to be taken in the next phases of work.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R2	<p>That an early task of the Director, Safer Birmingham Partnership be to review the contribution of BRGV2 and specifically report on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the production of clear targets and reporting mechanisms • the capacity of the workstream to deliver 	Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety	July 2010



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the engagement of all relevant partners / agencies in this work 		
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6.2.5 On completion of the above we would expect to see a communications exercise undertaken with partners and the community, to make clear any new processes and measures. This should help negate any feelings of confusion in particular at ground level and help reinforce the City Council's role in BRGV. Communications should be backed by the BRGV partnership as a whole, to reinforce the multi agency approach. In doing these communication exercises we would like to see the partnership utilising existing communication channels in local neighbourhoods.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R3	On completion of the above review a communications exercise be put in place making clear to stakeholders and communities the contribution and impact of BRGV	Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety	October 2010

6.2.6 Integral to the work of BRGV2 is the issue of capacity building small local organisations. We are keen to support those smaller groups who can have a much greater impact than some public agencies due to their local knowledge and greater acceptance at community level. However we recognise that the capacity of these groups is limited and as such they are often unable to secure funding to carry out their activities. It is therefore important that the work which BRGV2 undertakes helps rectify this situation.

6.2.7 In conjunction with the review of BRGV2, the BRGV Executive Board should revisit the arrangements to capacity build community organisations, to ensure that they are able to provide a service to our local residents. We understand that discussions around the use of the Creative Coalition (C3) have been in progress for some time. We would encourage the BRGV Executive Board to revisit this with the aim to formally establish their role. However if C3 emerges to be unsuitable for BRGV, then we would like to see measures put in place, such as another group who can provide this capacity building, to ensure this issue is dealt with. This should involve community groups themselves in having an input on what they require.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R4	That the BRGV partnership finalises the approach to commissioning and capacity building the community / third sector groups and appoints an appropriate organisation to facilitate this, if necessary.	BRGV Executive board	October 2010



BRGV3

6.2.8 In the course of this review we were unable to have productive discussion about the BRGV3 workstream, the role of which is described in 3.3.5, due to uncertainty about its status. We believe that BRGV3 is an integral part of partnership working and would stress that discussions and action around the appointment of a new chairperson should continue. Once this post is filled, we are confident that BRGV3 can make an impact and ensure the community voice is heard.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R5	That the BRGV3 workstream is rebuilt, beginning with the appointment of a new chairperson, to ensure the community voice is heard and to ensure the community is part of the solution to the gang problem in the city.	BRGV Executive Board	August 2010

6.2.9 With regards to the involvement of community groups and local residents, the new heads of BRGV2 and 3 need to work together closely. Evidence gathering showed uncertainty about where community groups should sit. We are of the opinion that if a community group is providing a service, it should sit in BRGV2. If it does not and is providing feedback it should sit in BRGV3. We are of the opinion that a community group cannot be placed in both workstreams. The feedback loop should also have a particular focus on the opinions of residents in local hotspots.

Other issues

6.2.10 We are concerned that where a parent or member of the community needs to raise an issue about the BRGV partnership there is no formal mechanism for this to be recorded and followed up. Stakeholders need to be aware that their own complaints procedures can and should be used in this instance, and fed back to the BRGV Executive.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R6	That BRGV partners are made aware that their own complaints procedures can and should be used in dealing with complaints relating to BRGV activities. Any complaints should also be fed back to the BRGV Executive.	BRGV Executive Board	August 2010



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6.2.11 Whilst the range of people and services involved in BRGV is significant, we would like to see more involvement from the Integrated Youth Service, in particular for them have a presence on the Executive Board. An increased involvement is important given the decreasing age of gang members and the support that can be provided by those with experience of working in this area.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R7	That the Integrated Youth Service is brought into the BRGV partnership, taking a lead role in the prevention agenda, and with a role in BRGV2 and a place on the Executive Board.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	August 2010

6.3 ...to prevent young people from joining gangs?

6.3.1 Prevention is always better than cure. Therefore seeking to prevent young people from joining gangs should be a priority. It could potentially save lives and cut the cost to the city of capturing, convicting and rehabilitating in the future, freeing up resources to be used elsewhere. BRGV has mainly been reacting to critical incidents and has highlighted that it lacks the resources for mediation, prevention and intervention work. A shift in mindset and the mainstreaming of prevention work should increase effectiveness.

6.3.2 Services delivered to provide diversionary activities will be better received if young people and those in the community are involved in designing them. Youth involvement in this sense has been shown to work in local community groups and in groups established by proactive police officers in neighbourhoods. There are clear opportunities for this to occur, especially with the Total Place pilot on guns and gangs, which should be taken advantage of.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R8	That the Police and City Council ensure that the community and in particular young people are involved in discussions to inform the planning and delivery of services through mechanisms such as BRGV3 and the Total Place agenda.	Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2010

6.3.3 Whilst we understand that for budget reasons the implementation of Safer Schools Partnerships (SSP's), described in 3.4.2, may not be a priority, the benefit of the initiative cannot be underestimated. This is because of the positive effects it can have on preventing young people joining gangs. Whilst we would like to see officers based in all schools in hotspot areas, a priority



for BRGV should be to encourage SSP's to be established in secondary schools. Head teachers commented on the need for stability in the post of a schools based officer and we would support this. We would then like to see this rolled out to other areas of the city, taking into consideration the Building Schools for the Future programme.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R9	That the Safer Birmingham Partnership Executive Board, with support from the Youth Crime strategic Group, examines how the programme of Safer Schools Partnerships can be funded and extended.	Chair, Safer Birmingham Partnership	October 2010

6.3.4 We were pleased to hear that the work of schools is establishing a sense of pride in young people for their school and community around them. However there is always room and opportunity to align schools further to the prevent arm of BRGV. In particular we would like to see take up of after school and evening activities increased, promoting these through SSP's that will make young people more aware of the activities in their local area.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R10	That through the Youth Offer, local community groups providing diversionary activities are identified, pupils made aware and encouraged to take part in these, particularly in hotspot areas of gang activity.	Cabinet Member, Children Young People and Families	October 2010

6.3.5 The good practice coming from Manchester in relation to mentoring, referenced in section 4, is something we believe the BRGV partnership could adapt to help prevention measures. It would also support communities' belief that local role models are one of the best ways to help at risk young people. We would support the implementation of a mentoring scheme, where at risk individuals are supported in their school and personal life.

6.4 ...to target those in gangs?

6.4.1 The work around targeting gang members in Birmingham, catching and convicting them is particularly successful, as evidenced by the reduction in gun crime over the past few years. It is important in this aspect that communities are increasingly confident in reporting incidents to the Police.



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6.4.2 In addition we would hope that civil injunctions will again be used where necessary, as they proved successful when used in previous years. It should be reinforced that the use of gang related injunctions can be a positive and that these civil actions could be controlled and effected in conjunction with elected Members and local residents.

6.5 ...to help those who want to exit gangs?

6.5.1 The BRGV partnerships work in ensuring gang members are given opportunities to exit the gang lifestyle and prevent a return to gangs is commendable. Work through the Multi Agency Gang Unit (MAGU) appears fit for purpose and is fully supported.

6.5.2 We are concerned though, that should a gang member decide to leave a gang and require support there is no specified place to go or person to contact to help this. Given the nature of gangs it is unlikely that a young person would go straight to an agency such as the Police. Glasgow's practice of holding a call in for known active gang members and providing and publicising a single point of contact, outlined in section 4.4, could possibly be utilised in Birmingham. We are aware of the successes this method has had in Glasgow and would like to see the BRGV partnership investigating the viability of doing something similar.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R11	<p>That the BRGV partnership looks at the viability of implementing new schemes taking account of good practice elsewhere including:</p> <p>a) using local role models as mentors in schools for 'at risk' young people, following the Manchester example</p> <p>b) holding 'call ins' for known current gang members actively participating in crime to highlight dangers of lifestyle and available alternative options, following the Glasgow example</p> <p>c) providing a point of contact for those who wish to exit the gang lifestyle, following the Glasgow example</p>	BRGV Executive Board	October 2010

6.5.3 The current economic climate makes finding employment for young people leaving gangs particularly difficult. Entrepreneurial skills of some gang members are recognised but the resources are limited to channel these skills in a different way. We would however reinforce that there are some opportunities which can be maximised by partners, in terms of prevention and exiting gangs, such as the Future Jobs Fund. We were pleased to hear that apprenticeship schemes are being



rolled out to young people leaving gangs and would strongly recommend BRGV encouraging this in the future. In more general terms we would stress the importance of these schemes as being crucial to supporting young people and encourage partners to work together in the spirit of Total Place to ensure that they remain.

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R12	That the BRGV partnership encourages programmes such as the Future Jobs Fund and Urban Living apprenticeships to provide support for gang members looking to leave the lifestyle and find employment and for those at risk of joining gangs.	BRGV Executive board	October 2010

6.6 Overall

- 6.6.1 A Probation service's representative in our opinion concluded rightly that it is not the gang that is the problem, but the violence and criminal activity associated with it. As such we should not demonise all young people who group together. The public nature of the violence which is perpetrated by criminal gangs, witnessed by innocent citizens and communities, presents an ongoing challenge to the police and partners. This challenge is often accentuated by press reports which focus more on the problems rather than positive crime reduction and regeneration news.
- 6.6.2 Overall, we believe that tackling gang violence through BRGV has a proven track record. The BRGV partnership is advanced in its approach, but it is not complacent. BRGV needs to be flexible enough to recognise that risk varies from person to person, neighbourhood to neighbourhood and over time. A continued focus on prevention will also produce cost savings to partners.
- 6.6.3 Political commitment to this issue is essential, not just when a critical incident occurs. The message needs to be strong and consistent that gang violence will not be tolerated and there is an exit route for those who wish to take it.

R13	Progress on the above recommendations should be presented to the Equalities and Human Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November 2010. Subsequent updates will be scheduled thereafter. When the committee is satisfied with the rebuild of the partnership, tracking to be handed over to the Local Services and Community Safety O&S Committee.	BRGV Executive board	November 2010
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Appendix 1: Terms of reference

Our key question:	How effective is the multi agency partnership approach to Reducing Gang Violence in Birmingham?
1. How is O&S adding value through this work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This work will support the Council's strategic objective of "Stay Safe in a Clean and Green City our citizens living in communities that they want to belong to" and the priority outcome "reduce the most serious violence, including tackling domestic violence, gang and gun related crime and violence in public places". • It will also support the strategic objective "Making a contribution: valuing one another and playing an active part in the community" and the priority outcome "Strengthen community cohesion and integration between residents of different backgrounds" and the priority outcome "Encourage more active participation of Birmingham's citizens in neighbourhood and citywide organisations, events and civic institutions. • It will also support the work being undertaken to improve performance on NI 15 (Serious violent crime rate), NI 29 (Gun crime rate) and (Local Indicator Reducing Gang Violence.)
2. What needs to be done?	<p>The key lines of enquiry are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the features of the partnership approach currently used by the City Council? • How is the work of BRGV joined up with the Neighbourhood Agenda? • How is Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence funded? • How does the Council work with our partners such as the Police, Probation Service, Mediation and Transformation Services, Youth Offending Service, Anti Social Behaviour Unit, Youth Services, Schools and Colleges and Community Groups on this issue? • What are partners' views on its effectiveness? • What is happening in other Local Authorities and how does Birmingham compare? • What more can be done to prevent young people from becoming involved in gang related violence? • If the ability to use Court Injunctions to tackle gang violence is introduced as part of the Crime and Policing Bill, will this make a big difference? • To ascertain the views of communities in which gangs operate
3. What timescale do we propose to do this in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference to Equalities and Human Resources: February • To Co-ordinating Committee: February • Evidence gathering: March-July • Report: December 2009
4. What outcomes are we looking to achieve?	Recommendations on what more can be done to reduce gang related violence
5. What is the best way to achieve these outcomes and what routes will we use?	A Scrutiny Review with evidence gathering sessions to be taken by the Review Group. A report will be presented to City Council in December 2009.



Appendix 2: Evidence contributions

Organisations and agencies involved in providing evidence for this review are listed below. We are grateful to those involved for taking the time to participate in this review.

City Council

- Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Families
- Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources
- Constituency Services
- Equality and Diversity
- Housing Needs
- Inclusion Support
- Litigation

External partners

- Aston Manor School
- Black Radley
- Bromford Support
- Holte Visual & Performing Arts College
- Holyhead School
- Mothers in Pain
- Probation Services
- Regional Offender Management Services
- Safer Birmingham Partnership
- Street Pastors
- Washwood Heath Technology College
- The Centre For Conflict Transformation
- West Midlands Police
- Youth Offending Services
- Young Disciples



Appendix 3: Study – effective partnership working

Introduction

Partnership working is an ever increasing feature of public and other services and is seen as part of the modern council approach to making real improvement. They do bring with them their own risks so it is important they are reviewed regularly to check their effectiveness, ensure they are meeting their short, medium and long term goals and have public trust and satisfaction.

In order to evaluate partnership effectiveness there must first be an understanding of the factors which underpin a strong partnership. Much guidance and literature on this topic has been produced both nationally and locally. In particular the City Council has produced a partnership governance framework and toolkit, which aims to examine partnerships to ensure they are providing added value and value for money. This paper provides a brief overview of some of the factors in assessing a good partnership.

The Councils definition of a partnership is derived from the Audit Commission definition, as outlined below:

A partnership is a joint working arrangement where partners

- 1) are otherwise independent bodies
- 2) agree to cooperate to achieve common goals and outcomes for the community
- 3) share accountability, risks and resources and
- 4) create an organisational structure with agreed processes and programmes

A significant partnership is one which coordinates at a city wide level or contributes to the Local Area Agreement.

The benefits of partnership working

The implications of not working in partnership where necessary are apparent. Whilst there may be less bureaucracy, there could be increased cost or duplication of effort and approach from different parties. There is also the risk that a service may find it lacks the skills in a particular area to tackle a problem. There are therefore several advantages to services taking a multi agency approach.

A partnership should be able to deliver over and above the capabilities of a single partners or service. As such it may have access to additional resources that would not be found available by working separately. Bringing people together should also promote new ways of thinking and working, including improved knowledge of the opportunities available to them. Partnerships also allow costs and resources to be shared, therefore used more efficiently.



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There are, as with any way of working, a series of pitfalls which partners could face. A lack of clarity and accountability from the outset could lead to blaming particular partners when things go wrong. There would also be confused decision making processes which effect things like resources and coordination. Tensions between partners could lead to reluctance to share information or role conflict. These tensions could also result in one professional approach from a more dominant partner taking hold, rather than using a mixture of ideas and methods.

What is a good partnership?

A partnership can be seen as effective when it moves from a forming role to a functioning role and is able to sustain that functioning role as best as possible. This could be through regular renewing of vision and focus, keeping clear the roles and responsibilities of partners and progressing and achieving on targets. Should partners feel disengaged, have recurring tensions or a lack of commitment it can be seen as less effective. The BCC Partnership Governance framework outlines some general principles for effective partnership working:

- Objectivity – members of the partnership should always make decisions on merit. This includes making appointments or recommendations
- Accountability – the partnership should be accountable to the public for its actions and the manner in which they are carried out
- Openness – the partnership should be as open as possible and be prepared to give reasons for action taken

The following list is not exhaustive, but is derived from local and national guidance on partnership working and outlines the areas that reviewers may think about when analysing the effectiveness of a partnership.²⁹

Does it have a formal status where there is an agreed understanding and purpose?

There should be clear definitions that each partner is working to as this will provide greater clarity on why a partner is there. This common vision should focus on medium to long term strategies rather than quick wins.

The purpose of the partnership should also evolve with the external factors and environment it is working in.

Is it realistically sized and resourced with the right mix of skills to get the job done?

There is potential that a partnership could have a skills gap which needs filling by bringing in new partners or building on the capacity of existing ones.

It is also worth considering whether partners are appropriately involved, this does not mean they should have equivalent contributions as some will be severely under

²⁹ The following is summarised from www.lgpartnerships.com guidance



resourced compared to others. Being appropriately involved focuses on partners contributing at the right level and on the right subject.

Is it communicating well not only with agencies within the partnership but outside, and with communities?

This could include such things as producing an annual report or increasing the use of ICT methods.

Ensuring that the success stories and challenges are communicated to the wider public should help to increase trust and confidence.

If partners have dropped out, have the lessons been learned?

Feedback is crucial and will help improvement to be made to bring partners back on board or understand future issues for new partners

Is the partnership flexible and open to new ways of thinking?

Partners need to be willing to make changes and adopt new ways of thinking to achieve the complex challenges they face. Real partnership success could be based on willingness to change methods.

Do partners have an equal say in decision making?

This will help bring more ideas to the table and give the opportunity for the less resourced partners to build capacity and confidence

Conclusions

Partnerships will always have problems and risks associated with them, but it is about finding the right balance to make them work as effectively as possible. Measuring effectiveness can often be difficult as achievements take time to emerge. However it is still important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements as this will help shape effectiveness in the future. There are of course alternatives to partnership working, such as consultative arrangements or networks which do not involve organisational commitment and these should be used where appropriate, but may not bring with them the added value a partnership can bring to an organisation.



Appendix 4: Background documents

Audit Commission (2009) 'Tired of hanging around – using sport and leisure activities to prevent anti-social behaviour by young people'

Birmingham City Council Partnership Governance Framework

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (2009) 'Young People, Knives and Guns. A comprehensive review, analysis and critique of gun and knife crime strategies'

Centre for Social Justice: Breakthrough Britain (2009) 'Dying to belong. An in depth review of street gangs in Britain'

Home Office (2008) 'Monitoring data from the Tackling Gangs Action Programme'

Home Office (2008) 'Saving Lives, reducing harm, protecting the public. An Action plan for tackling violence 2008-11'

Home Office (2008) 'Tackling Gangs. A Practical guide for Local Authorities, CDRPs and other Local partners'

Home Office (2009) 'Youth Crime Action Plan: One year on'

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2009) 'Knife crime'

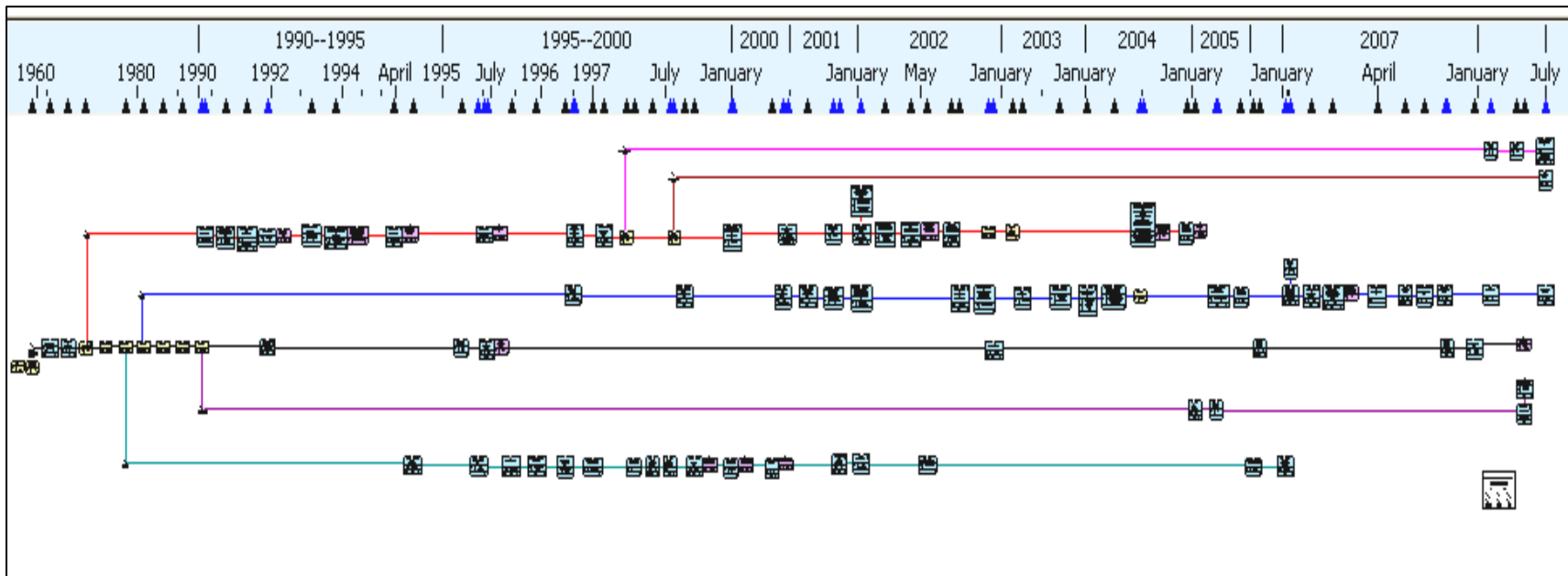
LG Smarter Partnerships – <http://www.lgpartnerships.com>

New Local Government Network (2008) 'Gangs at the Grassroots: Community Solutions to Street Violence'

Safer Birmingham Partnership (2008) 'Safer Birmingham Partnership Strategic Assessment 2009/10'

The Street Weapons Commission (Cherie Booth QC et al) (2008) 'The Street Weapons Commission report'

Appendix 5: Episodes of crime



The diagram represents the trajectory of the lives of just one real-life family involved in criminal offences. Each coloured line represents a person's life. The first individual's life is represented by the black line, and each box on the line represents an episode where one offence (or more) was committed. The next four coloured lines represent his offspring, with the two shortest lines representing two grandchildren.

KEY

Black line – First individual (Grandfather)

Red line – Offspring 1

Pink – Child of Offspring 1 (grandchild)

Green line – Offspring 2

Brown – Child of offspring 1 (grandchild)

Blue line – Offspring 3

Purple – Offspring 4

