



COMMITTEE AND MEETING DATE	PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 17TH JANUARY 2012
AGENDA ITEM No:	6
TITLE:	QUALITATIVE EVALUATION – YOUTH VIOLENCE PARTICULARLY FOCUSING ON ROBBERY
DATE OF REPORT:	23RD DECEMBER 2011
REPORT OF:	CHIEF CONSTABLE
AUTHOR:	CLARE HARPER SMITH
ACTION REQUIRED:	CONSIDERATION AND SUPPORT
APPENDICES:	NONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report examines robberies committed by and against young people, the level of violence and use of weapons involved in these robberies and steps being taken by the Force to reduce robbery by young people. The report also considers the current and potential effects of reduced partnership funding for young people as well as the role and limitations of the school liaison function within the new policing model for Bedfordshire. The report also considers high level implications of the government's on-going Munro Review into Child Protection and the refreshed focus of the Force's Children and Young People Strategic Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1:

The Police Authority endorses the Force approach to reducing youth violence, including robbery.

Recommendation 2:

The Police Authority endorses the Force approach to meeting their statutory Every Child Matters duties.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

ADDITIONAL PAPERS:

None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides a review of the work being undertaken to improve the Force's performance in relation to youth violence, particularly relating to robbery, as part of delivering the Strategic Intent.

2. STRATEGIC INTENT

- 2.1 The 2011-15 Strategic Plan outlines the Bedfordshire Police and Police Authority's Strategic Intent: The purpose is to "*fight crime and protect the public*", through delivering the following outcomes:

- Protection of life
- Protection from violence
- Protection of property
- Protection from disorder

- 2.2 These outcomes are to be delivered by ensuring the public are:

- Protected, by reducing crime and focusing on the offences that cause most harm.
- Satisfied, by agreeing the service we will provide and doing what we said we would do.
- Reassured, through visible and active local policing to tackle anti-social behaviour and protect the most vulnerable.

- 2.3 The Force will deliver this by being efficient, using resources wisely and striving to become the most efficient police force in England and Wales.

- 2.4 This report outlines how the Force will deliver the protection of life and protection from violence outcomes. It supplies the Police Authority with an extended qualitative evaluation of the Force's response to youth violence particularly in relation to robbery.

3. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 Bedfordshire Police Authority has a statutory duty under the Police Act 1996 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006) to monitor performance against the Policing Plan. The Police Authority agreed that qualitative monitoring of the 2011-15 Strategic Plan during 2011-12 would be through qualitative performance evaluations to the Performance Committee of specific aspects.

- 3.2 The Force is currently 39th nationally for robbery level and 22nd for robbery detections. These rankings relate to robberies committed by offenders of all ages against victims of all ages.

4. AGES OF ROBBERY VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS

- 4.1 Between 1st April 2010 and 23rd November 2011, 459 robberies were recorded on the crime system. For 190 robberies (41%), the victim was aged between 8 and 17. Graph 1 (see Appendix 1) shows the age profile of all robbery victims and graph 2 shows the age profile of robbery victims under

18.

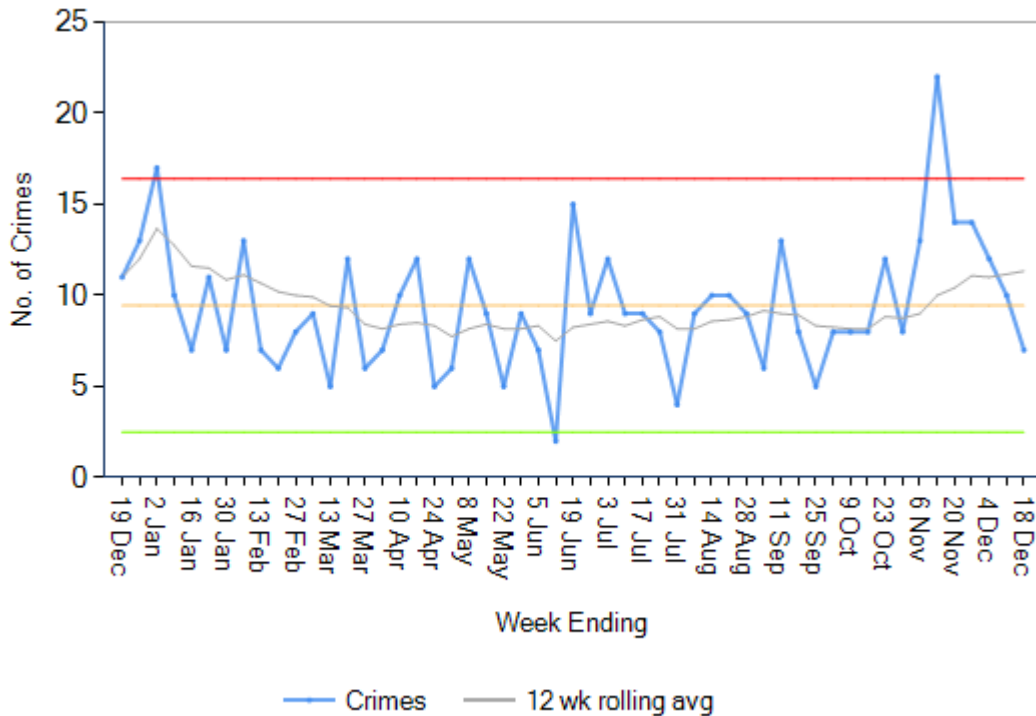
- 4.2 Graph 3 shows the number of robbery victims aged 8-17 by month. The reduction in robbery around December 2010/ January 2011 is linked to activity by Operation Nexus (see 5.5 below).
- 4.3 The detection rate for robberies involving a victim under 18 years is 61% for the same period and 54% for robberies involving a victim over 18 years.
- 4.4 For the period in question, a total of 400 people were accused of robbery, of which 224 (56%) were aged between 11 and 17 years. Of the 400 accused, 165 (41%) were aged 14 to 16 years.
- 4.5 Graph 4 shows the age profile of people accused of robbery where the victim was under 18 years. Of all robberies committed against victims under 18 years, a total of 99 robberies (85%) were committed by an offender who was also under 18 years.
- 4.6 Graph 5 shows the age profile of people accused of robbery where the victim was over 18. Of all robberies committed against victims over 18 years, a total of 48 (33%) were committed by offenders under 18 years.
- 4.7 This suggests that victims under 18 years are usually targeted by offenders who are also under 18 years, but far less frequently targeted by offenders over 18. However, victims of robbery who are over 18 years may be targeted by offenders of any age, including under 18s.

5. LUTON COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CSP)

- 5.1 Luton CSP strategic assessment for 2011/12 is aimed at reducing reoffending for offenders aged between 14-21 years. The previous year's assessment had focussed on offenders aged between 15-19 years.
- 5.2 Robbery has increased in Luton. Between 1st April and 2nd December 2010 there were 293 offences compared with 332 offences for the same period in 2011. This represents a rise of 13%. This robbery spike is believed to be attributable to a couple of crime series seen in recent weeks and a number of individuals who are believed to be responsible have been identified. A number of specific plans and tasking have been put in place. This includes:
 - Intelligence being developed to establish the extent of the group;
 - Long and short term tactics between the Local Policing Team and partner agencies;
 - Stop checks are being carried out in the area;
 - Uniformed Protective Services (UPS) resources are being deployed to the area when appropriate;
 - Local schools are being visited to provide advice on crime prevention to potential victims;
 - Bluetooth messages are being released daily;
 - Media messages regarding property marking are being used;
 - Suspects in council homes are being visited by local police and council staff;

- Residents overlooking the area where robberies have occurred are being asked to be extra vigilant and contact police to report suspicious activity.

5.3 As a result, Luton has seen a reduction in robberies in recent weeks which is shown in the graph below.



5.4 Actions are being monitored through the Force Weekly Tactical Advisory Group (WTAG).

5.5 Regarding reoffending as a whole, the most recent Luton CSP performance report states: “This measure is based on further offending levels of a cohort of 10 to 17 year olds over a one year tracking period. Reoffending rates for young offenders in Luton has followed a sharp decrease in the last five years overall and has consistently been at lower levels than national and family levels since 2006. There was a very slight increase however in 2010, which was in line with national and family trends, but outcomes should be viewed positively as Luton young people average less than one new further offence”.

5.6 Through the Customer Services Team and Luton Borough Council Youth Workers, action has been ongoing for several years to improve the Force’s engagement with young people in Luton. This has primarily focussed on understanding what prevents young people from engaging with the police and developing activities to help overcome these barriers.

5.7 This involved building up trust and reassurance to a point where hard to reach young people were willing to attend an open day at Luton Police Station. The timing of this day was set to coincide with National Customer Service Week in October 2009.

5.8 Two further open days have since been held with the last one in May 2011. A total of 450 young people attended over the three days. However, further days are on hold due to financial and resourcing considerations.

6. USE OF VIOLENCE/ KNIVES IN ROBBERY

6.1 An analysis was undertaken on 147 robberies in which the youngest offender was aged between 11 and 17 years for the period April 2010 to November 2011. Where more than one offender was recorded for an offence, the analysis was conducted using the age of the youngest offender involved.

6.2 The weapons used are shown in the following table.

Weapon	Number	Percentage	Total
Verbal Threats / Aggressive Behaviour	30	20.4%	81.0%
Fists/ Hands/ Feet/ Head/ Knee	86	58.5%	
Snatched from Victim (not classed as weapon use)	3	2.1%	
Knife / Penknife / Scissors	16	10.9%	16.3%
Handgun	1	5.4%	
Machete	2		
Cigarette Lighter	1		
Knuckleduster	1		
Bottle	1		
Chain	2		
Unknown	4		2.7%

6.3 It can be seen that 16.3% of the robberies analysed involved the use of a weapon, whereas 81.0% involved threatening behaviour, using parts of the body as a weapon or snatching items from the victim. In 2.7% of robberies, the victim was unable to state whether a weapon was present.

6.3 The age profile of weapon use by offender is shown in the following table.

Age	Weapon	Number of Weapons	Total Offenders in Age Group	% Carrying a Weapon
11	Penknife	2	2	100.0%
12	Chain	1	11	9.1%
13	-	0	9	0.0%
14	Knife	4	39	20.5%
	Machete	2		
	Scissors	1		
	Cigarette Lighter	1		
15	Knife	1	34	5.9%
	Chain			
16	Handgun	1	33	15.2%
	Knife	1		
	Penknife	1		
	Knuckleduster	1		
	Bottle	1		
17	Knife	6	19	31.6%

6.5 No weapons were used in the 9 robberies in which a 13 year old was the youngest or only offender. Only two robberies were recorded with an 11 year old as the youngest or only offender. Both these robberies involved the use of a penknife.

- 6.6 Operation Nexus (the Force's guns and gangs unit) also identified links between a spate of robberies in Bedford and an attempt to develop drug dealing. A number of offenders were charged and, together with visits to families, etc. the number of robberies subsequently reduced in late 2010/early 2011. Operation Nexus continues to develop intelligence in relation to drug dealing groups and currently 17 nominals have been charged, two of whom have previous convictions for robbery.

7. REDUCED PARTNERSHIP FUNDING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- 7.1 Across England, youth services have been hit by public spending cuts with more than £100m removed from local authority youth services.
- 7.2 A recent survey amongst the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services found some councils cutting between 70% and 80% of youth services. Nationally almost 3,000 full-time staff have been lost, and universal services such as youth clubs have been hit hardest: 96% of members who responded said club activities would be either reduced or stopped altogether by April 2012.
- 7.3 Across Bedfordshire, all three local authorities have been undertaking spending reviews which include Children Services. However, it is too early to indicate the full impact of any budgetary changes to young people's services and more importantly what impact it will have on Bedfordshire Police.
- 7.4 It is hoped that the voluntary sector will play a bigger role in supporting young people, although as most third sector organisations get the majority of their funding from local authorities, this may not be feasible.
- 7.5 Fears have also been raised that deep reductions in youth service budgets, particularly to programmes that divert young people away from gangs and knife crime, could have a devastating impact on crime levels. The Children and Young People Development Officer continues to liaise with partner agencies and monitor national trends and developments.
- 7.6 Historically, Bedfordshire Police have received funding through the Tackling Knives Action Programme (TKAP). However, this funding has now been withdrawn from police forces and is now only available to third sector organisations. This subsequently saw an 80% reduction in the amount of funding available in Bedfordshire to tackle knife, gun and gang crime.
- 7.7 In London where there has already been a dramatic decrease in youth service funding youth violence is already increasing. Figures reveal that serious youth violence increased by 4% last year across the capital, with a 9.6% hike in knife crime.
- 7.8 The effects of youth service cuts can also be more subtle with evidence beginning to emerge from third sector organisations indicating that young people who previously used youth centres and did not take drugs may be starting to use cannabis.
- 7.9 Against this backdrop, the Force recognises the importance of continuing to consult with young people about the shape of policing services. Training has

been provided to all Local Policing Teams around consulting young people and involving them. Consultation continues during school holidays to ensure that young people have a chance to express their views.

- 7.10 Recently, specific consultation took place with young people from across Bedfordshire asking how Bedfordshire Police can better engage with them. The main suggestions received from this consultation have been incorporated into the Bedfordshire Police Children and Young People Plan which is owned by the Assistant Chief Constable (Local Policing and Crime) and is driven by a strategic group and a tactical group.
- 7.11 Results from all consultations are fed back to young people using a 'You said – We did' method.

8 SCHOOL LIAISON FUNCTION

- 8.1 Bedfordshire Police is committed to supporting and working with schools and other educational establishments. With the implementation of a new policing model in October 2011, the provision of services to schools is now provided by local policing teams (LPT) as opposed to dedicated schools liaison officers as previously. These changes are building upon the working relationships that have been built up between schools and Bedfordshire police over a number of years.
- 8.2 Historically, Bedfordshire has been served by 5 school liaison officers whereas, under the new model, 123 Police Community Support Officers are available to support schools.
- 8.3 The changes to schools liaison have increased consistency in delivery of service across schools and allows greater participation in the school curriculum as well as dealing more effectively with spontaneous issues that may occur. During the design of the new model, a number of stakeholder meetings were held to ensure that Bedfordshire Police continues to meet the needs of educational establishments.
- 8.4 The new way of working in schools is linked more closely to Force priorities as opposed to providing an input on a wide range of subjects that may have already been delivered by other agencies.
- 8.5 Local policing teams ensure that every school knows their local PCSO. Depending on community issues and availability, LPTs will attend safeguarding meetings and respond to trigger incidents with additional inputs as required.
- 8.6 Consistency around LPT inputs has been improved by providing lesson plans and a resource pack aimed on 7-13 year olds. Individual schools can select which inputs they want to receive. Schools have also recently received guidance as to when a police intervention may be appropriate.
- 8.7 Crimes linked with schools are monitored by exception as part of the corporate performance management framework on a quarterly basis at the Performance Delivery Board.

- 8.8 A number of schools have changed to academy status, however there has been no significant change in working arrangements with these establishments.
- 8.9 The first free school in Bedfordshire is due to open in September 2012. The force is already in discussion to ensure that they and their students are fully supported.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MUNRO REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION

- 9.1 The Munro Review of Child Protection was commissioned in June 2010 by the Secretary of State for Education as part of a national drive to improve the quality of child protection services. The first report was published in September 2010 and an interim report was published in February 2011. The final report due in April 2012.
- 9.2 The first report provided an analysis of the unintended consequences of previous reforms that had arisen in the child protection system. It concluded that professionals are constrained from keeping a focus on the child by the demands and rigidity created by inspection and regulation.
- 9.3 The aim of the second report was to consider the characteristics of an effective child protection system and the reforms that might help to create such a system. Whilst the report endorses the crucial role that inspection can play in improving services for children, the review calls for a more pragmatic approach with a greater emphasis on the training and judgment of professionals rather than a reliance on standard procedures.
- 9.4 The review is currently seeking the help of professions involved in child protection to develop the reforms proposed in the report before producing the final report and recommendations.
- 9.5 The Detective Superintendent for Public Protection is keeping abreast of developments under the Munro review and feeding these into the force's Children and Young People Strategic Board. Pending further direction from the government following completion of the review, the Force is continuing to monitor Every Child Matters against the existing internal strategy.

10 FORCE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE STRATEGIC BOARD

- 10.1 This Board met last on the 9th November 2011. Members had been requested at the previous meeting to provide suggestions as to where the Board should focus its efforts going forward. A consultation exercise was conducted to ask young people where they felt the police should concentrate effort and resource. The overwhelming response to this was that the young people consulted wanted the police to tackle bullying (both direct and via the internet).
- 10.2 Following this, it was agreed that the Force should focus effort on:
- Bullying
 - Problem families

- Diversion from crime

10.3 Further discussion will take place between the ACC (Local Policing and Crime) and the Detective Superintendent (Public Protection) as to how as an agency the police are best placed to take these forward. Closer working with third sector organisations would also be explored.

11 SERVICE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Robbery is a Force priority and ensuring that the Force continues to drive down robbery is key to achieving the strategic intent and performance ambition set by the Chief Constable.

12 CONCLUSION

12.1 The Force continues to recognise its commitment to children and young people through Every Child Matters, schools liaison, guns and gangs unit and tackling robbery initiatives. The Force also recognises that tackling violence and robbery amongst young people is critical to delivering the force's Strategic Intent.

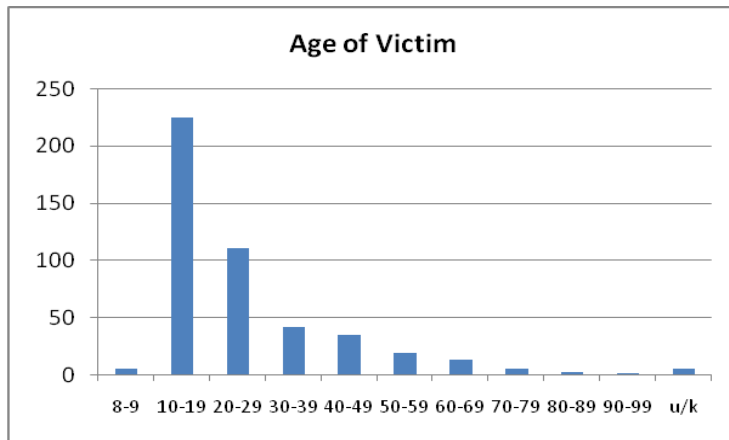
13 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The Police Authority endorses the Force approach to reducing youth violence, including robbery.

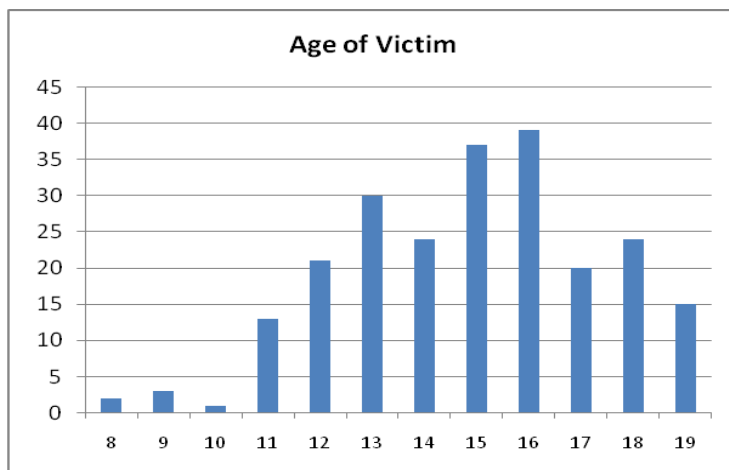
Recommendation 2: The Police Authority endorses the Force approach to meeting their statutory Every Child Matters duties.

APPENDIX 1 – AGES OF ROBBERY VICTIMS AND OFFENDERS

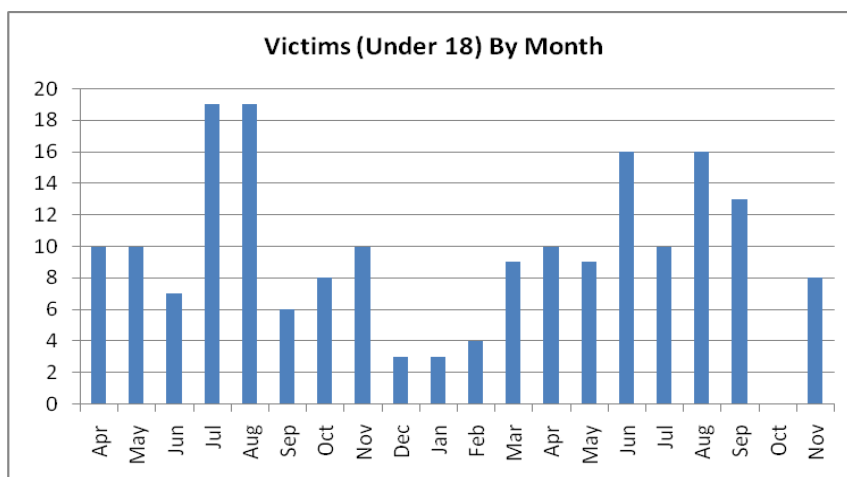
Graph 1 – Age profile of all Robbery Victims (number of robbery victims in each age group)



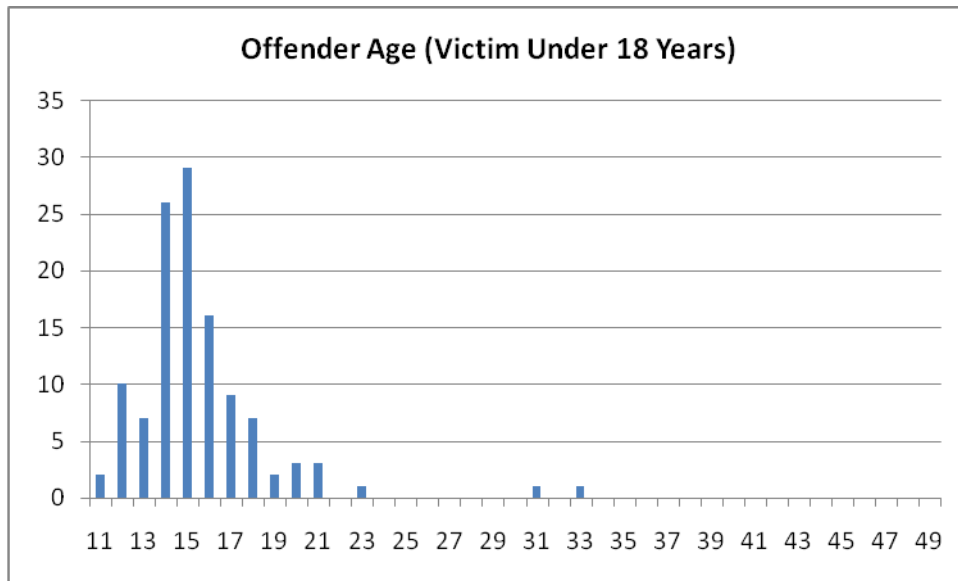
Graph 2 – Age profile of Robbery Victims under 18 years (number of robbery victims of each age (under 18 years))



Graph 3 – Robbery Victims Aged 8-17 By Month (number of robbery victims aged under 18 years by month from April 2010 to November 2011)



Graph 4 – Age Profile of Accused (number of robbery accused of each age where the victim is under 18 years)



Graph 5 – Age Profile of Accused (number of robbery accused of each age where the victim is over 18)

