

Title of Report	Community Safety Partnership Response to the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission's Policy of Drug Use Recommendations
Author	Jason Davis
Meeting Date	19 September 2023
Cabinet Member	Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas
Group Director	Chief Executive Dawn Carter-McDonald

1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1. On 23 January 2023 the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission held a discussion on the policing of drug use in Hackney, providing insight into the local partnership approach to the policing of drug use and the arrangements in place to ensure effective partnership working and accountability.
- 1.2. Subsequent to this meeting, the Scrutiny Commission put forward a set of five recommendations seeking reassurance from the Community Safety Partnership and MOPAC on the formal partnership, governance and monitoring arrangements in place in Hackney and the progress made against the key strategic priorities identified within the 2019-22 Community Safety Plan.
- 1.3. The following is a co-ordinated response to the Commission's recommendations.

2. RESPONSE TO THE LIVING IN HACKNEY SCRUTINY COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation one

The Community Safety Partnership publicly commits to an approach to the policing of drug use which seeks to prioritise diversion and timely access to drug treatment and support rather than criminalisation beyond the lifespan of Project ADDER.

Response

The supply of controlled drugs and substances misuse is a Community Priority under the Hackney Community Safety Plan 2023/26.

The primary agency leading the delivery of our drug plan is Public Health and in particular Project ADDER. Under the Community Safety Partnership Statutory Officers Group there is a Strategic Combating Drugs Board and Operational Board Chaired Public Health.

There is an action plan supported by analysis to identify hotspot areas and trends. Through the weekly tasking meeting and Drugs Operational Board partnership resource is tasked to priority areas. For example, outreach, enforcement and treatment interventions have been undertaken in the following locations - Gillett Square, Ridley Road area, the night time economy and a number of Hackney's estates including Hawksley Court, Clarence Road, Clapton Square and the Narrow Way.

Drug use is harmful and dangerous, impacting our communities as well as the individuals using those drugs. The reasons people use drugs are varied, and often arise from significant vulnerabilities and unmet support needs. Punitive approaches to individuals using drugs can be detrimental, often ignoring the reasons behind drug use and leading to continuous cycles of drug use, harmful behaviours and increasing criminalisation of people. This does not help vulnerable people and it perpetuates negative impacts to our communities.

The Public Health team are committed to ensuring that all individuals using drugs are offered timely support to move away from behaviours which cause them and others harm. To ensure this happens we commit to working with our partners across enforcement services to ensure that diversion and support is utilised to ensure vulnerable individuals are supported rather than criminalised. Where the impacts of peoples' behaviours are significant enough that enforceable approaches are necessary we commit to ensuring we help support individuals through their engagement in the criminal justice sector and work to help them better connect into the community and away from harmful behaviours. This includes ensuring that individuals leaving custodial settings receive the support they need when they return to their community.

Recommendation two

The Community Safety Partnership gives assurance, through relevant outcomes and key performance indicators, that clear progress has been made against its On Street Drug Markets and Substance Misuse strategic priority for 2019-22.

Response

Through the use of the newly formed Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP), and its associated strategy and operational groups, new KPIs and strategic outcomes focussing on reducing the harms of drug use across the borough have been set. The following are the key outcomes the CDP is working towards:

- 1. Prevent and reduce premature deaths of people who use drugs.**
 - a. Increase in the numbers of drug users engaging in treatment as well as increases in those achieving and sustaining recovery.

- b. Increase the number of people making significant improvements whilst working with services.
- c. Increase the number of people engaging for other health needs.

2. Reduce the impact of drugs on our communities

- a. Provide better cohesion from community exclusion (secure estate/reconnection to local area/post hospital discharge) into community.
- b. A reduction in drug related reoffending amongst prolific offenders within local areas.
- c. A reduction in drug supply.
- d. Reduced costs for local health services and police forces due to lower health and crime harms, and lower costs to the criminal justice system (as fewer people are dealt with by the courts).

3. Improve the wellbeing of people exposed to the harms of substance use

- a. Increase in the number of people moving into paid employment from drug treatment services.
- b. Reduce the impacts of homelessness and insecure housing for people exposed to drug harms.
- c. Increase the number of young and vulnerable people safeguarded.

4. Reduce inequalities in substance use support

- a. Improve quality and comprehensiveness of demographic data.
- b. Increase the proportion of underrepresented groups engaging in treatment.
- c. Increase positive outcomes from underrepresented groups.

Recommendation three

The Community Safety Partnership develops and shares an updated Governance Map and Terms of Reference, which outlines its membership, key responsibilities and relationships with newly formed community safety structures such as the Local Policing Scrutiny Panel and Combating Drugs Partnership.

Response

The Community Safety Partnership is in the process of refreshing its governance and approach to performance reporting. We have recently refreshed the ToR and Governance map. There is still some work to do to establish both a new strategic board addressing the Community Safety Plan priority of 'Trust and Confidence in policing, and the reporting link between the combating Drugs Partnership and the CSP Statutory Officer Group.

The latest terms of reference are linked [here](#)

The latest governance map is linked [here](#)

Recommendation four

MOPAC outlines the roles, responsibilities and membership of Hackney's Local Policing Scrutiny Panel Pilot, as well as how it will be funded, how success will be monitored and how it will differ from previous engagement structures such as the Safer Neighbourhoods Board.

Response

As set out in the Mayor of London's Action Plan for Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing, MOPAC officers have been progressing work to overhaul community engagement and scrutiny mechanisms to ensure they are more accountable, transparent, and representative of local communities, and in particular young people.

Formal scrutiny of policing in Hackney has previously been undertaken by a community monitoring group, and MOPAC has worked closely with LBH to develop and pilot a new local police scrutiny panel that has replaced that group.

Following the release of the Child Q safeguarding report, the Council's response to this included the creation of a trust and confidence action plan, co-produced between community partners, the Council and police. One of the priority areas of the trust and confidence action plan is community scrutiny and in particular a focus on extending opportunities for local communities to monitor and scrutinise police practice and decisions in order to improve policing practice for all residents in our borough.

MOPAC worked closely with LBH officers to launch the local scrutiny pilot and ensure that the recruitment process was robust and had good reach amongst Hackney's diverse communities (see below). The pilot is funded by MOPAC and will run as a pilot for at least 1 year and will be evaluated by MOPAC's evidence and insight team. The evaluation will inform the work in subsequent years in Hackney and beyond.

The Panel is currently undertaking an induction and training programme and the Panel's first official meeting will take place on 7th September. The pilot is supported through a steering group, which includes MOPAC, senior Council and Police officers and the Cabinet lead for Crime and Community Safety.

The local scrutiny panel will sit alongside wider engagement mechanisms such as the Safer Neighbourhood Boards and Ward Panels. Please note that they are currently under review and that these groups are more focused on engaging with residents and understanding local priorities for policing, they do not serve a formal scrutiny function.

This work forms part of Hackney's Trust and Confidence action plan. Trust and Confidence is also one of Hackney's Community Safety Plan's 6 priorities. As a strategic priority a Police led Board will provide partnership governance and report into the CSP's Statutory Officer Group.

Recommendation five

MOPAC gives assurance that Hackney's Local Policing Scrutiny Panel Pilot:

- A. is well resourced and supported across the local partnership;
- B. prioritises the representation of Hackney's diverse communities, particularly those who are disproportionately affected by the use of police powers;
- C. ensures that young people in particular are supported to engage with its work and that their insight is fed in consistently.

Response

a) The pilot is funded by MOPAC and will be evaluated by MOPACs evidence and insight team. The evaluation will inform the work in subsequent years in Hackney and beyond.

b) MOPAC worked closely with LBH officers to launch the local scrutiny pilot and ensure that the recruitment process was robust and had good reach amongst Hackney's diverse communities. 14 candidates were offered places, the key demographics of panel members break down as follows:

- 7 male, 6 female
- 1 aged 15-17, 3 aged 18-24, 2 aged 25-35, 4 aged 35-45, 4 aged 45-55
- 6 Black, 1 Turkish/kurdish, 3 White, 1 mixed background, 2 Asian, 1 Orthodox jewish
- 1 panel member who has disclosed that they are a member of the LGBTQIA community
- 1 panel member who has disclosed a disability
- 5 panel members who are parents

c) 4 of the 13 panel members are under 25 years old, with one being in the 15-17 year old age bracket. Working with the young people on the panel and those members who work with children and young people will be key to ensuring that the lived experiences of children and young people, including those directly impacted by Police interactions, influences and informs the panel. This is also in line work being undertaken by MOPAC, working with the MPS and other partners to develop a child first approach to policing.