

## London Borough of Waltham Forest

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Report Title Communities Scrutiny Committee, Mini-Themed Review 2023-24, Combatting Serious Violence in Waltham Forest

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Meeting / Date Cabinet, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Cabinet portfolio Councillor Khevyn Limbajee  
Portfolio Lead Member for Community Safety



Report author/  
Contact details Rosie Whillock, Scrutiny Policy Assistant  
Resources

[Rosie.whillock@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Rosie.whillock@walthamforest.gov.uk)

Wards affected None specifically

Public access Open

Appendices Appendix 1. Communities Scrutiny Committee, Mini-Themed Review 2023-24, Combatting Serious Violence in Waltham Forest  
Appendix 2. Proposed Response  
Appendix 3. Equalities Analysis Screening Tool

### Summary

- 1.1 The Councils scrutiny committee's conduct themed reviews as part of an annual work programme. This allows committees to engage in a sustained way with a particular topic. This year the Communities Scrutiny Committee conducted a themed review into Combatting Serious Violence in the Borough. The attached report sets out the Committee's findings and recommendations.
  
2. Recommendations
  - 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
    - 2.1.1 Note the Communities Scrutiny Committee Mini-Themed Review.
    - 2.1.2 Approve that the recommendations outlined in the report be adopted and taken forward as outlined in the proposed response in appendix 2 including where recommendations have been amended.
  
3. Proposals

- 3.1 The Committee conducted its mini-themed review throughout 2023-24 and its approach is outlined in appendix 1. Officers have prepared a response which is attached in appendix 2. Cabinet are asked to review and approve the response.
- 3.2 The full recommendations are outlined in the report (appendix 1). A summary of recommendations can be found below:
  - 3.2.1 Recommendation 1: The Council to explore more ward level youth-only spaces, which allow young people to feel safe and relaxed.
  - 3.2.2 Recommendation 2: Youth workers employed by the Council are Mental Health First Aid trained and proficient in Trauma Informed responses.
  - 3.2.3 Recommendation 3: The Council to explore offering gym memberships and other sports activities to young people with a reduced cost.
  - 3.2.4 Recommendation 4: The Council to work with food banks to support them in exploring ways to enable young people to access services easily.
  - 3.2.5 Recommendation 5: The council to facilitate training (and refresher courses) delivered to all MET police about trauma informed approaches and engagement, building up trust with young people and their families.
  - 3.2.6 Recommendation 6: YA/YIAG extend their training and refresher courses to all police officers and not just new employees.
  - 3.2.7 Recommendation 7: The Council to explore how to enhance the promotion of life-based lessons in primary and secondary schools. Such as, budgeting, tax, and bills.
  - 3.2.8 Recommendation 8: Community Safety Officers work with education colleagues when talks are being delivered in schools, to promote what's available for young people.
  - 3.2.9 Recommendation 9: Officers to develop support for parents who may fear negative repercussions if they ask for help, such as the Godwin Lawson Foundation.
  - 3.2.10 Recommendation 10: The Council to consider ways they can promote a sense of belonging and positive sense of self with young people who live in the borough, in partnership with schools and VCSE organisations.
  - 3.2.11 Recommendation 11: The Council to find out what schools are offering for young people and providing additional provisions, seeking to build on the existing offer.
  - 3.2.12 Recommendation 12: Council services champion co-design and collaboration with young people from the early stages when introducing new policies and strategies.
  - 3.2.13 Recommendation 13: When work has been done with young people, the Council ensures they are kept informed about the result of their input.

3.2.14 Recommendation 14: The Council to research into the effects of domestic violence as a driver of serious violence, promoting the results.

3.2.15 Recommendation 15: The Council to circulate information about safe spaces and initiatives in libraries and cafes as well as digitally.

#### 4. Options & Alternatives Considered

4.1 The Committee has reviewed the Council's policy and practice, and its proposals relate to current service delivery. It is a requirement for the Cabinet to consider each individual scrutiny committee themed review and respond to the recommendations within the report. The Community Safety Team has worked closely with other council services and the Police in considering each of the recommendations.

#### 5. Council Strategic Priorities (and other National or Local Policies or Strategies)

5.1 Tackling serious violence is a national priority and is prominent in the Government's Beating Crime Plan. The Serious Violence Duty requires each local area to develop and publish a serious violence needs assessment, strategy and implementation plan. Waltham Forest partners published an interim strategy and action plan in late 2023 and intend to publish a public-facing strategy in September 2024. These recommendations, and responses, will be reflected in the strategy development process alongside further data analysis, resident engagement and lessons learned from recent critical incidents. The recommendations align strongly with Waltham Forest's public health approach to tackling violence, in particular with the 'strengthen', 'support' and 'treat' domains. The revised strategy will embody Mission Waltham Forest's commitment to tackle inequalities and engage and empower our residents.

#### 6. Consultation

6.1 Formal consultation is not required for a scrutiny committee to conduct a themed review. The Committee has, however, spoken to a range of witnesses and sought a diversity of views in respect to its topic along with working with services inside and outside the Council, as set out in its report.

#### 7. Implications

##### 7.1 Finance, Value for Money, and Risk

7.1.1 The recommendations have been developed so that they can be implemented within the existing budgets available to relevant services. However, if in preparing to implement the recommendations contained within the themed review report, they are not sustainable within existing resources and officers find that additional expenditure is

required, a report should be brought back to Cabinet to explain either: a) why the recommendations cannot be implemented; or b) proposals to finance their implementation.

## 7.2 Legal

7.2.1 Part of the Council's constitution sets out the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules including, in paragraph 5, the procedure for Policy Review and Development. This report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 6.1 of the procedure rules as a report by Overview and Scrutiny. The procedure rules provide that in carrying out any such policy review or development, Overview and Scrutiny must have regard to available budgets and resources (para.5.2) and make recommendations to Cabinet (6.1).

## 7.3 Equalities and Diversity

7.3.1 An Equality Analysis screening tool has been completed and is attached as appendix 3.

## 7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

7.4.1 The recommendations contained within this themed review report may have a positive impact on sustainability as engagement at an earlier stage may avoid sustainability implications at a later date. The recommendations may have an additional impact on sustainability, arising from day to day operations. These concerns will be taken into consideration by relevant officers during the design and implementation phase. If in preparing to implement the recommendations contained within the themed review report, they are noted to have a negative impact on sustainability, a report should be brought back to Cabinet to explain either: a) why the recommendations cannot be implemented; b) options to curtail negative sustainability impact.

7.4.2 Fear of crime has consistently been a top concern for Waltham Forest residents and there is a particular concern about serious violence. These recommendations will help refine our approach to tackling violence, reducing the number of young knife injury victims, which is a priority for SafetyNet, the borough's statutory Community Safety Partnership.

## 7.5 Council Infrastructure

7.5.1 The recommendations contained within this themed review report are expected to be delivered within existing council infrastructure and resources.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None