

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
(REGENERATION & SKILLS)**

**PEER REVIEW WORKING GROUP  
FINAL REPORT  
MARCH 2017**



# Overview & Scrutiny



**'Valuing  
Improvement'**

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## LEAD MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to submit to you the findings of the investigation in relation to the Peer Review with Sefton's Partners.

This opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the council's work that goes unseen by the public through partnerships which are of highest strength and communication beyond the day to day emails and phone calls has been an experience that further proves how hard our officers and partners work under some of the most strenuous times I know of. Cuts and re-structures with changing political climates do not make a difference to how hard our teams work in making our communities, safer, better and built to be resilient against negative situations.

The Government were critical in their review but we have gone further and scrutinised the holistic map of Sefton's work in this area. We have met with several key members of our network who have explained the day-to-day roles that they fulfil and the in-depth cases that they become involved in.

There definitely are still improvements that we can make but if there is one main thing we've learnt from this review, it is that there is a united aim to always be ready to take on new challenges and do better the next time, or prevent it from happening again at all.

On behalf of the Working Group I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the agencies, outside bodies and organisations that took part in this review and all Members and Officers from Sefton M.B.C. that were involved in completing the report.



**Councillor Dan. T. Lewis**  
**Lead Member of the Peer Review Working Group**





## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 5 July 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) agreed to establish a Peer Review Working Group.
- 1.2 At its meeting held on 20 September 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) appointed Councillors Dan T. Lewis (Lead Member), Claire Carragher, Michael O'Brien and Anne Thompson to serve on the Peer Review Working Group.
- 1.3 Details of Working Group meetings are as follows:-

Date	Activity
12.8.16	Appointment of the Lead Member – Councillor Dan.T.Lewis. Agreed Scope of the Review. Received Background Information – Home Office Peer Review.
7.9.16	Reviewed activities undertaken at the various Partnership Meetings.
10.10.16	Next Steps.
20.10.16	Interviewed Representatives from Sefton's Area Command Team.
1.11.16	Interviewed Senior Probation Officer and Representative from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.
15.11.16	Briefed on the Role of the Safeguarding Nurse at Aintree Hospital.
24.11.16	Presentation from Mr. Riley regarding the "Get Away N Get Safe" Project.
8.12.16	Interviewed the Head of Communities and Service Manager, Integrated Youth Services.
15.12.16	Next Steps.

- 1.7 Members of the Group drafted and agreed the following terms of reference and objectives of the review:-

## 2.0 PEER REVIEW

To review Sefton's approach to Serious and Organised Crime (SOC), in light of the Home Office Peer Review findings in November 2015. Overview & Scrutiny are asked to review the report and:

1. To ensure that the recommendations of the Home Office Peer review are considered and where necessary implemented.
2. Be satisfied that the findings of the report are accurate
3. To be assured that those leading on the agenda in Sefton have a sound approach
4. To challenge and make recommendations to improve service delivery



### 3.0 METHODS OF ENQUIRY

- 3.1 Background reading.
- 3.2 Presentation of information and progress.
- 3.3 Topic based discussion:- thematic meetings, drawing on key witnesses,

### 4.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 4.0.1 Members of the Working Group gathered evidence through various methods, including presentations and briefings and receiving reports. Evidence was also obtained when Members had the opportunity to interview key witnesses, various Officers and Partners.
- 4.0.2 The common theme raised throughout all witness interviews and what was reported as being key and underpinned the good work being done was the excellent approach and relationships adopted by all agencies in the Partnership. It became apparent that there was and is a genuine commitment by all in the partnership to work with all offenders to progress the Early Intervention and Prevention work being undertaken that could help to reduce Children and Young People becoming involved in SOC.
- 4.0.3 The passion, commitment and enthusiasm of individuals at all levels within the partnership was clear. The nature of the issue and impact on the community was well understood. There were examples of effective joint working ranging from improved information sharing and risk management through to co-location of key partners to deliver Integrated Offender Management and effective multi-agency enforcement.

### 4.1 PEER REVIEW BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1 The peer review took place over 4 days and consisted of taking into account the views of a wide range of stakeholders through a series of interviews. The review is intended to be a constructive and supportive process with the central aim of helping partnerships improve on how they deliver outcomes in tackling gangs and youth violence.
- 4.1.2 It is undertaken from the viewpoint of a 'critical friend' with an emphasis on self-assessment and the challenge of accelerating practical improvement, rather than merely diagnosing issues. The review looked at seven strands:
  - Strong local leadership
  - Mapping the problem
  - Responding in partnership
  - Assessment and referral



- Targeted and effective interventions- enforcement , pathways out and prevention
- Criminal justice and breaking the cycle
- Mobilising communities.

4.1.3 For the purposes of the review Members of the Working Group agreed that in order for it to be satisfied that each of the recommendations made by the Home Office had been implemented that each recommendation be set out, as detailed in paragraph 4.2 to the report, with an explanation as to the action taken against each recommendation.

## 4.2 SCOPE – TO ENSURE THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HOME OFFICE PEER REVIEW ARE CONSIDERED AND WHERE NECESSARY IMPLEMENTED

4.1.1 **Develop a long term strategy to deliver prevention, enforcement and to consolidate gains made.** Members of the Working Group agreed that the partnership were developing ways of consolidating the work already achieved in relation to enforcement activity. The partnership were working on longer term interventions that revolve around diverting young people “at risk” away from crime. Schools in Sefton are playing an instrumental part in raising awareness of the issues by supporting initiatives such as the “mini police” pilots, the “Get Away N Get Safe” (GANGS) and Evolve projects. The objective of those initiatives is to raise awareness of the dangers associated with SOC and to divert those youngsters deemed to be “at risk” away from the crime cultures or behaviours they may already be exposed to.

The GANGS project uses a programme that was originally created for year 11 school pupils. After the successful roll-out of the GANGS project it became apparent that interventions where also required of Years 4 and 5 in some instances. It has been adjusted for use with school years 6&7, to cover the transition from primary to secondary education, recognising that children are vulnerable to intimidation, bullying and gang recruitment at this time. The project highlights the dangers of gang lifestyles to young children and allows them to turn away from local negative peer groups. Interventions at this age range allow a wide range of “messages” and support to be delivered at an early intervention point. Through helping to identify non responsive groups it also supports interventions tailored towards those most vulnerable to gang recruitment.

The Multi Agency Response to Serious and Organised Crime (MARSOC) meet monthly to identify youths at risk and who may be on the cusp of offending. The MARSOC will identify suitable pathways of support or methods of disruption to divert vulnerable individuals away from SOC.

4.1.2 **Prepare a strategy document identifying key activities, key leads and establishing timescales.** There was an agreement that clear governance was required in order that key lead individuals are identified within the partnership, as the “go to” people for the clearance of blockages. Members of



the Working Group were satisfied that key lead individuals had been identified amongst Partnership Members so that decisions and actions could be moved forward quickly.

4.1.3. **Devise internal and external communication strategies.** The Partnership has developed the following guidance documents to support it and Members of the Council in addressing matters relating to Serious and Organised Crime:-

- Protocol – Multi-Agency Critical Incident Response Guidance. The protocol sets out guidance in relation to Merseyside Police’s process, Multi-Agency Process and Exit Strategy.
- Media Release Sharing Agreement – Merseyside Police now consult with Sefton Council’s Communication team before any media release is agreed to go out in the public domain.
- Terminologies Consistent – The partnership use the same language.
- Information Sharing – Clear and Concise

4.1.4 **Make use of gang flag on Police National Computer (PNC).** Working Group Members recognised that the use of gang flags on PNC would be a useful tool in enhancing intelligence in relation to “group” offending. Working Group Members were given examples of how a flag method had been adopted locally and more specifically in relation to the partnership approach adopted with the Lead Safeguarding Nurse. To build upon the local use of a flag system and translating that through on National approach would be effective in tracking the movements of gang Members around the Country and highlighting offending behaviours in other areas. Such intelligence can inform effective interventions and help to identify more mature offenders who are exploiting young vulnerable people.

4.1.5 **Consideration for the Organised Crime Group (OCG) co-ordination meeting to be held prior to the MARSOC.**

- OCG Weekly Governance (now monthly).
- Pre-meet between MARSOC co-ordinator and Chair of the MARSOC to discuss agenda items and specific issues.
- Representative on the Threat, Harm, Risk Force Meeting held weekly.

4.1.6 **Raise awareness amongst partnership frontline operators and voluntary sector of context of offending and possible responses.** Based upon the evidence received from witness interviews, Working Group Members were satisfied that the Community, on the whole, were positive and supportive about the work the Police, Council and other partners were doing in relation to addressing the serious and organised crime culture. There was a view that there could be an opportunity to harness and bring the Voluntary Community Sector deeper into the operational structure.



- 4.1.7 Refresh and develop key individual network with potential for local IAGs.** The operation developed by Merseyside Police in relation to a pan-Merseyside Independent Advisory Group (MIAG) was something that Members felt could be mirrored at a local level. This could be achieved by exploring the potential of Local Independent Advisory Groups as another method of communication between partners and the local communities. It was felt that IAGs could assist with regard to community reassurance and in providing community intelligence. This has now been progressed and the first Meeting of the Sefton Community Advisory Group was held on Monday 27 February 2017.
- 4.1.8 Further develop links between public and commercial sectors, e.g. taxis, licensing trade.** Members of the Working Group acknowledged the safeguarding model which embeds critical pathways for child sexual exploitation into the main safeguarding process. The inclusion of commercial sector pathways such as taxi operators and licensees provide good examples of a public/private approach to safeguarding. This work with those groups could be translated through to the Partnership, as those groups are looked upon as the eyes and ears within our Communities.
- 4.1.9 Engage health, prisons, JCP etc. at strategic level.** Working Group Members agreed that the MARSOC process would benefit from attendance by representatives of the Voluntary Sector, Prisons and Job Centre Plus. Job Centre Plus could provide potential options in terms of diversion/exit through preparing individuals for work or the claiming of benefits to avoid reliance upon income from crime. Bringing the voluntary sector closer to the process is likely to result in referrals into the MARSOC/Youths at risk from those engaged in outreach. Members of the Working Group were satisfied that the MARSOC could build upon the secure ways that are already in place, in which relevant information can be discussed.
- 4.1.10 Continue with problem solving approaches, e.g. fire bags, designing out crime, Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) etc.**
- SMARTWATER technology for lighting and CCTV columns.
  - New Public Spaces Protection Order for Marian Square and surrounding areas – to tackle high level Anti-Social Behaviour and disrupt those involved in Serious and Organised Crime.
  - Supporting Infrastructure such as CCTV upgrades in HOTSPOT areas and other identified areas.
  - Drug wipes for targeting known vehicles linked to Serious and Organised Crime and disrupting activity resulting in disqualification and fines.

4.1.11 **Early Intervention Foundation Work.** The MARSOC partnership constantly reviews its Early Intervention and Prevention work and where necessary use experiences and evidence from the foundation.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Working Group Members referred to the outcome of the Home Office Peer Review and drew on areas of best practice. The Working Group agreed that in its view, it had taken the Sefton MARSOC time to review and reflect on its priorities and its approach which had enabled it to develop an effective and efficient partnership that tackle the issue of serious and organised crime. The Working Group agreed during the review and through evidence received that to widen the footprint on a Pan Merseyside basis needed a similar approach and the local perspective not to be lost.
- 5.2 Members of the Working Group were reassured to learn that Sefton is a safe place to live, work and visit.
- 5.3 After receiving all evidence and receiving information at evidence sessions Members of the Working Group were satisfied that the findings of the Home Office Peer Review Report were accurate.
- 5.4 Working Group Members were reassured that those leading on the Agenda of Serious and Organised Crime in Sefton have a sound approach and will continue to ensure that Sefton is a safe community to live, work and visit.
- 5.5 Members of the Working Group agreed that the excellent practices identified by the Home Office as practices that other areas could learn from should be celebrated. Working Group Members agreed that it reflected the excellent partnership approach that exists within Sefton.
- 5.6 Members of the Working Group recognised that in times of budget constraints, public sector agencies face significant pressures to reduce costs, but still deliver results. The Working Group agreed that the Partnership should be praised for its sterling efforts in ensuring that Sefton remains a safe place to live, work and visit in the current difficult financial climate.



## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

- 6.1 That tribute be extended to all those Partnership Members who play a vital role in ensuring that Sefton is a safe community to live, work and visit;
- 6.2 That the Lead Member of the Peer Review Working Group, Councillor Dan. T. Lewis, be requested to present the Final Report of the Working Group to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills), the Cabinet and the MARSOC;
- 6.3 That the MARSOC be requested to investigate the merits and feasibility of a secure and sophisticated Information Sharing System/Programme to be shared/used by key Officers in the Partnership;
- 6.4 That the MARSOC be requested to approach Further Education establishments to investigate the feasibility of developing a course specifically aimed at targeting a cohort of young offenders;
- 6.5 That the Partnership be requested to develop a pathway leading to the signposting of services for those individuals with a desire to change their behaviour and depart from being involved with SOC (Using Partnership funds were available to invest in programmes for young people who are vulnerable or at risk to becoming adopted into SOC. For example business training, Modern Technology Training or Mentoring);
- 6.6 That the MARSOC be requested to speak with schools across Sefton about how the data they hold on every child can be shared between schools when the child is departing from one to another in order that schools can be alerted to SOC or vulnerability in the community;
- 6.7 That the Youth Prevention Team and Youth Offenders Team receive, where possible support and/or funding to improve, introduce and promote the 'Neglect Strategy' which will further support the prevention of young adults accessing SOC while also helping young people prepare to become young adults;
- 6.8 That the Council submit this report with feedback from success stories to the Government department and Minister to request increased funding from central Government for this borough so that there is not a decrease in some of the highest quality serious and organised crime prevention work in the UK; and
- 6.9 That the Head of Communities be requested to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) on the progress made in relation to the implementation of recommendations on an annual basis, until the recommendations are signed off as complete.





## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

In producing this report regarding the Peer Review, acknowledgements and thanks are attributed to the following individuals for their time and input:-

- All Key Witnesses
- Officers, Partners and former Members of the Working Group

Thanks must also go to the Members of the Working Group who have worked hard and dedicated a great deal of time to this review, namely:-



***Councillor Dan. T. Lewis  
(Lead Member)***



***Councillor Claire Carragher***



***Councillor Michael O'Brien***



***Councillor Anne Thompson***

**Overview  
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