

**Street Weapons Commission – London**  
**Mayor Jules Pipe (Hackney)**  
**Borough Commander Steve Dann (Hackney)**

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Well if I can welcome Jules Pipe the Mayor of Hackney and Chief Superintendent Steve Dann of the Borough Police Commander of Hackney. Gentlemen you two have been cooperating together on a scheme to tackle violent youth crime in the borough of Hackney so can you tell us what's the situation like on the ground in Hackney and what are you doing to deal with it.

**Jules Pipe**

Well firstly I'd like to say that we're very pleased to be here and that this commission is happening because it is a very serious issue in Hackney but it's not serious issue in Hackney because Hackney is this kind of ghetto of crime of London and I probably want to just say that this issue in Hackney has got to be seen in context against a background of us being a borough

where there are 15 other boroughs in London now of the 33 where you're more likely to be the victim of street robbery. 17 where you're more likely to be a victim of burglary. And even in terms of serious violence there are eight boroughs in London where you're more likely to be a victim of serious violence in Hackney. You know just as a passer by a visitor the

Home Secretary for example late at night. That's the reality. That is the reality for most residents and most general visitors. And actually what you're discussing as far as Hackney is concerned is something that happens to young people from seven, eight onwards up into late teens into the 20s. And sadly just certain sections of the community as well. I'd like to put that

in context. This is a serious issue for us but it's not one that results from Hackney just being kind of the worst crime borough in London. Quite the opposite.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Well I'm a former resident of Hackney myself but I've also had teenage boys at a time when we were living in Westminster and I would agree with what you say that this is a

problem that is a London wide problem. But what we were interested in is that actually in Hackney you've been taking the lead to tackle it so perhaps you Superintendent would like to tell us a little bit about that.

### **Steve Dunn**

Certainly and echoing what Jules has said thank you for the opportunity to be here. I think the initiative you're referring to is what we call Operation Kerb. And Operation Kerb is a Met wide initiative to tackle youth violence. But we've gone one step further. Working very closely with partners in local authority and other agencies. Bought together a team of officers

and we've looked at the offenders, the offender profiles, or potential offenders and we broke them into their tiers. The high tier where we concentrate on at the moment only five people but we're looking to increase that to ten very shortly because as a pilot we found it so successful that I'm actually going to mainstream this and put more resources into it. but we concentrated on

these five people and these are people who have shown an unwillingness. They've not wanted to engage at all in intervention diversion those sort of opportunities. And we use every tool at our disposal about enforcing their behaviour. So we started out just towards the end of last year and so it's been going nearly six months now. We then have a medium tier and with

the medium tier people those are people who potentially could come into the top tier but they are willing to engage in initiatives, diversion intervention initiatives, and what we have found with that is that we have prevented people actually stepping into the top tier, being either victims of violence which is a big issue for youth as well. Not just the offenders. But prevents them

becoming offenders as well. And the way this works is that my team meet with housing, social services, drug action team, a group of people on a fortnightly basis and review the different tiers. And then having identified a medium tier person in intervention opportunities are provided with various initiatives that exist. Working with particular success is the gang mobile intervention team

we refer to it, which started before the Kerb, initiative that we have running and again those are people who are community workers. A police officer is attached full time and their sole purpose is to get hold of these people before they fall into gangs and other

serious violence behaviour. And again the initiatives are jointly led. There's some police initiatives police cadets.

There's the kicks football project and urban cricket project. All these different initiatives that we give those opportunities to those people that are willing to engage. And there we hope they fall into the bottom tier which is those people who aren't going to offend, who potentially could become gang members who are siblings of gang members. We've got a particular success story

of a young girl, 14, where we provided funding and supported her to go to New York where she's now got a full time scholarship in dance. And her brother, one of her brothers is in prison the other one is a gang member, and we've managed to support her working with other agencies and includes voluntary agencies as well to prevent that happening.

### **Cherie Booth (Chair)**

We've heard a lot about how multi agency approach is clearly the way ahead here. But we're also very interested in how you identify those top tier group? How do you engage with youth who by definition almost don't want to engage with you? I mean how do you do that?

### **Steve Dunn**

Again to identify the top tier we actually have a meeting and one of the issues has always been is the data sharing, the information sharing. And what we've worked through that and we're actually I think a long way down the road of actually sharing information. The different agencies that they possess from schooling to housing, to drug action, to health, to try and

identify those core people that we think are going to be either victims and we have had one recently who was in our top tier who was murdered. We've also had one in the top tier at the start who was arrested and charged with murder. He's in custody at the moment. So we're identifying I think the right people based on the intelligence and information that we possess.

Again partners and with police youth offending teams actually are the people that engage with these people, try to engage with them, and they bring that information and intelligence to the table so we can identify those people. And then make sure that we actually are an intelligence led and focused on the right people.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

But then having identified them then what do you do?

**Steve Dunn**

Well the top five is where the enforcement comes in. so we do home visits. Anti social behaviour orders. We're looking at injunctions. The stop and search side of things. Because they're not engaging and unwilling to engage with agencies and to break their offending that this is the way this is the enforcement tier of it. It's the top tier. If they look to engage then

we move them down to the middle tier and we use and work with the agencies that exist on these initiatives.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Well we heard a little bit about ASBO earlier today. And of course ASBO are often something that local authorities are also the main users of ASBO I mean how useful do you find them?

**Jules Pipe**

Well I think it's generally felt by many now that ASBO are really a symbol of failure really. To have got that far. I mean our preference if something is that bad is to use acceptable behaviour contracts. And also we're going down the route of using injunctions and getting agreements with family members to change their children's behaviour. So we haven't simply gone down

an ASBO route. But as Steve said that's very much to try and curb literally those people at the top end, the higher end of the spectrum. It's not seen as a stick only approach and just by enforcing these kind of measures that you would bring young people back on track. That's really more just a kind of those people who have already gone that far is to actually bring them

back into what Steve was talking about that kind of middle tier where using more positive ways of engagement can actually happen.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

But can you actually move them from that top tier to the middle tier I mean have you got examples of that?

**Steve Dunn**

Yes we have. Since we started this just before Christmas and as I say we have the five and some of those stayed with us for a number of weeks and months. We've actually had 15 separate people that have actually been subject to the top tier. Of those 15 nine are either in custody and so a number of them have been arrested or have actually dropped down to the middle

tier. So there are successes with that. But these are real hardest to reach people on the borough like Hackney. These are the ones that all agencies are struggling to deal with. And hence the involvement of all agencies in looking at how we can actually either work with them if they won't work with us

we then have to move to the enforcement part of it.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Well obviously those in custody is a different story but the ones that you've moved down to the lower tier, the middle tier, how did you do that? What worked? What was the carrot that made them decide that they would engage with you?

**Steve Dunn**

I think personally it's the enforcement part of it. The bit about.

**Liam Black**

It's you being on their case all the time.

**Steve Dunn**

Yes. And literally that's what it is. My team are out there. I mean we met on the town hall steps before coming here and the team were out and about round that area. That is their job. They see these people. They stop. They talk to them. House visits. In March we did 83 separate house visits on these top tier people. And then you gather that intelligence. You find out about

siblings which then share that information with those people who don't want to become

part of the gangs. But it is I think a large part of it is that. But because we've got the links into the mobile intervention team which are community workers they can then work with these people and provide those opportunities. So we've got a young lad at the moment who's actually

in custody but has indicated when he comes out he wants to be involved in the Kicks project which is the FA sponsored football initiative which we're one of the key boroughs that support this initiative, which is football on estates. It's about giving those opportunities for that to do these something different. The intervention side of things.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

So never closing off the way to come back into the mainstream.

**Steve Dunn**

No, no definitely not and that's a big thing about it is that whilst they sit there, if they're willing to engage, they will drop into the middle tier. And we will then replace them with someone else. And as I say we're now looking to move towards ten people as I'm doubling the size of this unit now because the success I've seen that it's had. The results that we've had because

previously the gang mobile intervention team worked by itself but when they met these people that weren't willing to engage with them there was nowhere for them to go. Hence we bought this curb team into the enforcement part of it.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Gus I think...

**Gus John**

How much does that cost per capita?

**Steve Dunn**

I have some information. For me it's a sergeant and five constables at the moment and I'm looking to double the size of that. So I couldn't off the top of my head. I mean they are not extra resources. They're resources that exist on my borough. But actually the reduction in youth crime that we've had is no small part to what they've done. So you

could balance that with the reduction of a number of people going through the judicial system.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

But could you give us an idea what a sergeant and five constables would cost?

**Steve Dunn**

Certainly I could.

**Jules Pipe**

The operation as a whole cost about three quarters of a million in a year.

**Steve Dunn**

The gang mobile intervention.

**Jules Pipe**

The whole mobile intervention team itself.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

That's all tier?

**Jules Pipe**

Yes.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Gus.

**Gus John**

I want to just raise an issue about prevention. You may know that up till about ten years ago I was the director of education and INAUDIBLE services in Hackney. And at the time we had what I considered to be a strategic and holistic approach to working with the young people across schools, the leisure services and the borough youth service. And there you could

actually plan some programmes that involved everybody. And that really targeted those young people who were at risk of school exclusions and so on and so forth. While I understand and know about the work of the Dawson youth project and what the borough youth services attempting to do there seems to be a concern from what I hear on the ground in Hackney about the rate of exclusion still within many of those schools particularly the academies. Given the correlation between youth exclusion and school exclusion and youth offending how does your programme deal with the issue of school exclusion and actually preventing them rather than working with the young people after they've been excluded?

### **Steve Dunn**

There's a number of points to this. One is in every school we have a safe for schools officer in every secondary school across the borough and they're there to support the head teachers. They're there to provide information intelligence as well. And they do an absolutely fantastic job. And one of the schools he sits next door to the head teacher in that. We then have a number of schools initiatives working with trident who come and have done a number of presentations in the schools as well. I've done a number of gigs probably the way to describe it with Mr Levy. A pledge wall at one school where all the pupils signed up not to carry knives. Another thing at the Tower of London where we met about 150 eight to 12 year olds again explaining the consequences with it. Where I don't think we are I don't think we're strategic enough in that approach. If I'm being honest. And that's I think we've now got the relationship that we can actually move to that level and be more strategic and make sure it's more planned and focused.

### **Gus John**

INAUDIBLE ... influence this at all. In terms of what goes on in the individual schools.

### **Jules Pipe**

Well with local management of schools it is far more difficult. It can be by direction. It has to be by cooperation and I think a lot of that is driven by whether the schools themselves feel they have a problem and will acknowledge the problem. ‘

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Acknowledging obviously is sometimes a difficulty now. Fay.

**Fay Selvyn**

In your information that you've provided us with which was very interesting you've started talking about the work you do around drugs. And what I wanted to explore was just with you a bit more the link between gang and knife gun and knife crime and the drug problem as you see it and in particular in relation to crack and the prevalence of crack recently. Whether you think that has led to or been one of the factors that has led to an increase in gun and knife crime.

**Steve Dunn**

Well first off I've got to start off by saying we've had a reduction in gun and knife crime and a continued reduction over a number of years within Hackney. Whilst undoubtedly drugs drive some of the criminal activity I don't believe from what I've seen that actually that is behind the knife crime and violence that's out there. I don't believe that's the main driver behind that is my view.

**Fay Selvyn**

So why have you included the information then? Why have you told us that? It must have been something that you were thinking there's an angle there.

**Steve Dunn**

What we're doing I mean this is from the police enforcement side of things. What we're hearing is that there are drugs behind this so we've done a number of operations on estates where we've done test purchase operations and made arrests of key people and taken those key people out. They've been put in prison for a number of years. And then you look at the activity behind on that estate and has it reduced. Well it has reduced. Crime has reduced on that estate. But you've taken away those people who would be committing crime. I mean I think it gets

very complex around the drugs issues. Is it feeding the habit and they're actually committing crime and other crimes to feed the habit. Is it bringing other people into the area to buy the drugs which brings violence with it. Is it gang v gang issues as well? It's a very, very complex issue for me. What we have done, again supported by the local authority, we're about to form a small drugs squad. Not just the enforcement side of things but working with the drugs alcohol action team to try and look at preventing opportunities.

**Geoffrey Dear**

Could I just extend that to alcohol? Said anecdotally by many people that most problems from about seven o'clock in the evening are caused by alcohol but that's a very loose off the cuff statistic which I don't necessarily follow but clearly alcohol has a part to play and I wondered if you could expand the answer which encompassed drugs and move it into alcohol a bit?

**Steve Dunn**

Again I don't believe it's purely driven by alcohol and I don't think there's a massive youth drink problem that's causing the violence out there. By coincidence we've got the shortest town centre which is a night time economy area which we supporting and what's happened there is we have seen an increase in violence there. But these aren't youngsters we're talking about. These are adults. And we are putting again, supported by Jules, considerable resources into that full time a town centre team. Purely because of the night time economy violence issue and to reduce that ...

**Geoffrey Dear**

And that would presumably be alcohol?

**Steve Dunn**

It is that's alcohol driven. Predominantly alcohol driven.

**Jules Pipe**

More adults coming out of clubs late at night. That kind of spilling out. But it won't.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

As a recorder I've sat on trials that have involved INAUDIBLE ...

**Jules Pipe**

But that wouldn't be the kind of people that we're talking about here who actually probably going to Shoreditch would see you know for a night out would seem quite exotic. It's extraordinary the narrowness of vision that some of these young people have. People living in Hackney who have never been to the West End. Let alone further afield. So actually a trip to Shoreditch

for a night out actually is something really quite exotic. And it's not really those kind of people. And that probably is a huge issue behind what is driving it actually is poverty of aspiration. That's actually far more a factor in this than alcohol or drugs.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

Do you want to say more about that please.

**Jules Pipe**

I think it's built up over a number of years increasingly in places such as Hackney but in many other places up and down the country that I'm sure you as a commission are encountering. That there will be places where people have gone through not just one generation perhaps now two generations. Perhaps we're onto the third generation within families of people

where no one has ever worked in those families. And so the second and third generation they have no one challenging them about what their aspirations should be. So I mean we have spent a lot of time and Steve has very well put across the kind of what we're doing once things have gone wrong but actually there's a lot that we're trying to do from the other end of

things to stop things going wrong. And it's about trying to re-engineer that aspiration into the local society. And it's not something that you know Steve can do or I can do alone. It's not something for social services. It's actually for everyone within the local society. Where we can bring in other people and where we do try and bring in other people is people who

have

who can show these young people that there is something better. Something beyond their own postcode that they emblazon on walls all over the place and promoting postcode gangs. That kind of thing. And instead it's actually saying you know. I mean there are some fantastic stories of mentors from places like UDS and KKMG going into our schools, taking those kids into

work and when you talk to some of those kids afterwards it's absolutely amazing some of the things and the way they say it. I never thought I'd be allowed in a place like this. And that phrase is always stuck with me and the way that those children actually say that with such conviction. That you know they never thought they'd be allowed to even enter a place like that

because that wasn't for them.

### **Geoffrey Dear**

You're describing an under class or a growing under class that sees a huge divide between them and us for whatever reasons. You know the growth of an under class I think is something that this country faces as a real problem.

### **Jules Pipe**

I think that's where drugs can come into that on an estate is where the drug dealer is offering something aspirational. Where instead of you know I'm never going to go and work for UBS or a bank or a big company and have aspirations of going up the firm and having a family and all that kind of thing. instead the aspiration they see or the vision that they see is oh

well that guy over there. Nice guy. Lots of money.

### **TALKING OVER EACH OTHER**

### **Jules Pipe**

And seems popular. He's got all these people around him. And all that kind of thing. And sadly that's what's held up too often. If the sort of young children have got this poverty of aspiration where they're not getting off those estates and seeing the bigger and better things that they could aspire to.

**Geoffrey Dear**

Can I pose a question about detection? I mean as Mr Dunn and I both know when Robert Peel said on the Metropolitan Police he said the prime purpose of the police was prevention and indeed as an aspiration that's never changed. But moving away from prevention in which you're doing a great deal and very impressive it is too can you move us across to the other

end, the sharp end of detection and give us a bit more information about what you're doing there, gun crime and knife crime in particular.

**Steve Dunn**

IN relation to knife crime I'll deal with that for a second is the part of what we have discovered is that the caution and reprimand side of things for a knife was not having an effect. We are the leading borough in relation to charge for knife offences. Possession of knives. Possession of bladed article in the Metropolitan Police. 80% of those people arrested for that offence

are charged so they enter the judicial system as opposed to a reprimand or caution.

**Geoffrey Dear**

Can I be very rude and interpose? You might deal with that topic now and I was going to ask anyway as an adjunct it is sometimes said that whatever has been legislated over the years about offensive weapons fails because there's always an excuse to say why you had the knife or the sharpened screwdriver or whatever else in your pocket. And in effect even if you're found with

whatever it was it stands little chance of going to court and being convicted but actually you're saying something different aren't you? You're saying in fact if you go about it the right way you can get convictions in these circumstances. Can you tell me what it is that you're doing which bucks the old trend?

**Steve Dunn**

First of all it's a bit from me as the head of Hackney police. Knife crime and it counted for when we looked at an incident where a youth was stabbed to death in Hackney. A very unfortunate one and one of the very few that we've had. But we looked at the suspects

involved in that and in other individuals involved and we've done some profiling and some mapping but we saw within that everyone of those had a conviction or a caution or reprimand for an offensive weapon. My view, there's something wrong somewhere because they are still continuing to carry knives. What is it that is their lifestyle or their culture that is allowing them to continue to carry knives.

### **Geoffrey Dear**

And we as a society not stopping them.

### **Steve Dunn**

Yes and then I've done a gig with Trading Places its called where on one of the estates with a very hard to reach people helped by community workers we do a swap where police officers are there and they play the role of a member of the public, a youth, and the youth's do the police officer side of things. And it was absolutely fascinating. I mean I was the only one there in uniform

but watching what was going on in the discussions and they were a bit rowdy to start with , then they started getting into the role playing side of things. It was interesting how they reacted to if they were as a police officer approaching someone who there was information or intelligence that he had a knife, to their view was pepper spray him and all the rest of it

and put him down as opposed to explaining and carrying out your powers properly. So that was absolutely fascinating listening to that. But the two bits that really concerned me was when and the question was asked by one of the youth workers, who here carries a knife, so a couple put their hands up. Why do you do that? One was a status thing. two was we don't think we're going

to get stopped and searched. Now we have a very high stop and search rate. And a very high stop and search hit rate resulting in arrest. Some months 27% of those people stopped and searched are arrested. Now there's something not right if their lifestyle and culture is that they're happy to continue to carry knives or these ten suspects arrested for a murder

all have previous convictions or cautions for possession of knives and still continue with that behaviour. Now back to your point about the excuse of I need it because it's rough

round here.

**Geoffrey Dear**

Is the legislation adequate to deal with it?

**Steve Dunn**

I don't think it is. I think we're actually giving people and I think society is giving people this way out, this excuse, to carry a knife. This it's rough out there. Well it's not that dangerous out there where you have to carry a knife because you're more likely to become a victim anyway. And I've read a number of things in articles in newspapers and other media which

actually sort of provides this defence for people it's alright to carry a weapon because they say it's dangerous out there. Well we've shown this we've show that actually crime is down. We've reduced crime. Violence is down. So I can't sign up to that and I won't allow my people to sign up to that so hence we go for a very, very positive charging policy around possession of offensive weapon. I hope that answers your question.

**Gus John**

One question in two parts. First have you got any statistics on re-offending amongst the young people whom you put inside for these crimes. And secondly are there any schemes within the borough that involved working with convicted young people while they're inside and giving them a network of support when they are released?

**Steve Dunn**

Yes. In answer to your first question I haven't got them to hand but I can see what figures we can get for you there.

**Gus John**

What's your general view of that?

**Steve Dunn**

I wouldn't even attempt to guess. So when you look at this profile that we've started to do

on a number of these serious incidents we've had it's the pattern that builds up about and again I share that. I shared it with Jools and some of the other people. We spread out these big charts of these people who's

profiles going right back to when they were at school. We shared all that data. And you could see the pattern of how it was building up where they ... there was a bit of bullying at school. There was a bit of potential abuse from parents and parenting issues. You then get into the low level crime. Interesting enough they become a victim at some point and you're thinking

is that the point where they've become a victim because we don't put intervention or diversion into victims, they're a victim of crime, they're dealt with and then what happens? They continue their offending. Theft from motor vehicle. Robbery. Robbery at knife point. Possession of a gun. Dead. I mean it's as blunt as that in some of those cases when you look at

the way it builds up. And we spent some time and we're still working through this on these various incidents that we've had. And it's absolutely fascinating. Because we're looking saying have we missed intervention opportunities. Were there opportunities somewhere in the schooling, in the parenting, into when they've come into the notice of police, the ages of ten, 12, 13.

Is there something around the victim part of it we should be doing to prevent them ending up either as a suspect for murder or dead. There's got to be something there that we're missing. My view is if it's got to the stage of 13 and we're arresting them for the fourth time for theft from motor vehicle it's too late because they're offending is continuing. They're on that path and

there should be something there that we should be doing more intervention on is my view from that.

### **Jools Pipe**

That raises the big issue I think about data sharing because Steve is able to share these with me because these are sheets to do with other offenders or victims. But there must be a lot of professional people who with the right safeguards having hopefully just the beginning bit of that because there would be no later part of that list, but just the beginning part of that list when these

children are still children. They are you know six or seven would go a long way I think in

allowing the agencies to intervene earlier. But there are issues about data protection and that's a minefield in itself but I think it's key because as soon as you see three or four A3 sheets tiny, tiny print on the number of times that they have come into contact with myriad agencies and the similarities that are between individuals as well is really shocking.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

I think Ian has ...

**Ian Levy**

Just a quick question for you Steve. With regards to the people who you've moved down from the top tier to the middle tier do you find that there are any sort of reprisals from the people who are still on the top tier who are known to the people moved down? Do you find there's any reprisal from them?

**Steve Dunn**

We haven't at this moment in time but we're still very early into this project. And I can actually see that happening. The sort of peer pressure on these people. The same way we see it with siblings and we've got a number of cases where we supported by Hackney Homes have moved people out of the borough. Brothers and sisters of gang members they don't want to

become involved in it. So we've actually provided that support. There's nothing that we've been made aware of yet with the ones that have dropped down. But I have no doubt that that will happen so I can imagine the pressure on some of them will be quite difficult ... around what you doing. Why are you now conforming? Why are you going to play football and cricket?

Why aren't you hanging about on the street with us? So I can imagine it's quite intense. Hence the mobile intervention team are out there all the time. the community workers supported by police officer working with them and with this list of different initiatives that we have jointly with the local authority to try and divert them away from falling back into there. The cadets is a fantastic

way the police cadets. Over 30 police cadets. We're now about to employ a full time cadet officer coz my officers do it in their own time. We took six of them away sailing in

Portsmouth for a week and entered a police race with cadets and they won a prize for it. And they changed totally. It was incredible to see these guys change because the guy, the captain of the boat said to me he said I knew I had it with them when they became a team and he said one of them on the Thursday they'd been there since the Sunday and I went down to see them. On the Thursday he stuck his head up and said does anybody want a sandwich. And he said I knew then these kids were just about themselves. They were feeding themselves. He came up and asked everybody else. And he said it gave him a really good feeling that actually it had worked. We'd actually managed to crack them. The same way when I talked about the Trading Places I gave a speech at Trading Places with these youths sat round the community room and they'd been rowdy and mischievous and comments and I sat there for about ten minutes talking to them in full uniform, the only one there, and they stopped and listened and that I thought actually it's not too late. They aren't beyond help. And these kids had been arrested for robbery and knife crime but they shut up and they listened. And so inside somewhere I think that is there. That respect is there for authority. And I think we can't forget that and it's easy to do that as well.

**Cherie Booth (Chair)**

I'm afraid we've got to bring it to an end here. Thank you both Steve and Jules it was fascinating and thank you for saying that we should never give up on these young people because there's always a way to bring them back. Thank you.

CUT