



PROPOSAL:	DATE: 28/08/25
TITLE:	EXPANSION OF WEST VIEW DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES.
REPORT BY:	STEVE HANLEY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

(What is the existing context, where did this issue originate from, what developments have there been to date?)

This proposal, if funded, will enable progress within the Police and Crime Plan 2024-29, particularly Tackling Crime and ASB & Getting Tough on Serious Violence.

April 2025 saw the attempt murder of a 14 year old male in Moor Park whereby the victim was stabbed through the sternum. During the same incident two other involved parties, both aged 15, received knife related injuries. This incident occurred during the afternoon in a busy public location. The propensity to carry weapons is made far more concerning due to the willingness to use these without fear of being witnessed. As a result of this incident Preston United conducted a survey of 35 young people who they are mentoring to divert them away from criminality and ASB. Of that number, 30 admitted to carrying a weapon on a regular basis for protection purposes. Many of those surveyed are not known on police systems. Information sharing between the CSP has identified the issue of youth violence, SOC and county lines as significant. Economic factors lead Preston to be an ideal breeding ground for youth involvement in SOC with 17.9% of under 16's defined as living in poverty, which is above the national average. The St Matts Ward, within the Clear Hold Build area, is amongst the most deprived in Lancashire and, in turn, the country. A highly diverse community, combined with the deprivation, has led to little in the way of cohesion or community spirit amongst young people.

During the summer a youth diversion initiative was set up that was funded through the Police Prevention and Problem-Solving Innovation Fund to provide a programme of activities aimed at an identified cohort of hard-to-reach young men in an area of Preston that was subject to Clear, Hold, Build.

The organisers expected a sign up of around 50 young men, with an actual attendance of 20 per session. Due to the extensive communication activity that took place through several partners, and the community day that was part funded through the OPCC, the sign up was in fact 100 with on average 65 young men attending each session. The highest number attending one session was 75. Ninety five percent of those signed up attended all the sessions. These sessions were held at West View Leisure Centre (centre located within the Preston Clear Hold Build area).

The attendees carried out a range of activities that were supervised by youth workers, sports coaches and local police officers. Mentoring took place and a warm meal provided. These tactics follow guidance provided by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) around youth diversion, in terms of what they refer to as high impact interventions:



- Promote children and young people access to a local youth club, prioritising those who are vulnerable to violence.
- Provide children and young people access to trusted adults and positive activities, prioritising those that are vulnerable to violence.
- Promote a universal youth provision that is free to access.

YEF also evidence that vulnerable children are most likely to attend a youth club and children who are directly affected by violence are twice as likely to attend a youth club.

PROPOSED CHANGES/NEW IDEAS:

(What change or new idea are you proposing? How does it differ from what exists currently?)

The allocated PPIF funding has now been used to deliver the programme during the summer season.

The police, council leaders and the community have been impressed with the impact this has made in engaging historically hard to reach young men, some from families with an extensive criminal history containing OCG members and therefore there is a great appetite from the attendees and from the community for this to continue.

The amount requested will enable the programme to continue until January 2026. Following, it is hoped that The Vault youth provision (Preston Youth Zone) will be established in the area and the attendees of this programme will then attend be signposted to the Youth Zone.

The 15-week project will provide 40 young men (11 to 16) a weekly session, 7pm to 10pm that will give an opportunity to engage with a team, which is made up of qualified, skilled and experienced youth workers, sports coaches and police officers. The project will be based at West View Leisure Centre, where the group will participate in a range of sports.

Through engaging with the project, the young men will be provided with the mentoring to support through the transformative early stages of young adulthood. This key stage for many young men is a very difficult and challenging phase of their lives. Many live a chaotic lifestyle or live in a home where there lacks any type of family structure, and many have no positive role model in their lives. These vulnerabilities present exploitation opportunities to OCGs who operate across the city and the North West as a whole.

Of the mapped OCGs within Preston, two operate almost entirely with individuals under the age of 18. These individuals are primarily based within the St Matts and Fishwick Wards covered by the Clear Hold Build geographic area and which this project seeks to support. The objective of this project is to offer diversionary activity whilst increasing cohesion and engagement with services. The testimony of those involved in the summer project has shown increased socialising of young people across geographical divide which ordinarily would not occur. The continuation of this project seeks to build on this and prevent continued 'post-code' disputes and violence.



PROS:

(What advantages will this change bring)

This is a programme that has already been piloted with funding through PPIF and has been shown to be effective.

Ch Supt Ian Jones states some of the children that have attended are from families with clear OCG links and he is amazed at how successful it has been in both attracting attendees and retaining them.

Funding the initiative would support delivery of the following "I Will" in the Police and Crime Plan:

Tackle Crime and ASB

- Work with Community Safety Partnerships to ensure everyone does their part to tackle ASB, keep people safe and engage with those most at risk of becoming involved in criminality.
- Support local diversionary projects through grant funding, utilising cash seized from criminals.
- Support the introduction of the Young Futures Programme and Hubs

Get Tough on Serious Violence

- Support the implementation of Clear, Hold, Build across Lancashire
- Support activity to prevent young people entering criminality.
- Support community safety partners to develop prevention partnerships to identify vulnerable young people at the earliest opportunity and put positive pathways in place.
- Support intervention programmes, an innovative intervention programme supporting young people, aged 10-25 with experience of or at risk of offending behaviours.

Sustainability

Meetings are arranged with police and the programme leader to identify external funding streams that will allow the project to be supported from April 2026 to March 2027. These include looking at The Youth Endowment Fund, The Million Smiles Fund, and others that meet the objectives and aims.

The Vault Youth Zone, which is led by Tim Jacques (previous Lancashire Constabulary ACC) is a key partner. The Vault will host a separate night providing an additional offer for the young people. The Vault team has attended every session during the pilot playing a huge part in this project already so are familiar with those attending the programme.

CONS:

(What are the disadvantages to this proposal)

Financial contribution from the OPCC.

Future funding not confirmed although they are working with local partners to ensure signposting to other services in the future.



COSTS:

(What financial implications, if any might this change bring about?)

Funding Requested: £9,900

Breakdown:

- *Facility Hire - £3,600*
- *Preston Climb - £1,590*
- *Mighty Meals - £3,450*
- *Staff session youth worker costs - £1,260*

The project lead has negotiated reduced prices with West View Leisure Centre, Mighty Meals and Preston Climb.

Lancashire Constabulary have confirmed two officers will attend all sessions.

Signed by:

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner: