

November 2009

Time for Action

Daedalus update



1 Mayor's foreword

My desire to crack the problem of youth crime remains stronger than ever and my wholehearted commitment to support young Londoners achieve their full potential is undiminished.

I became Mayor against a sad backdrop of rising teenage murders, and it was clear that a fresh approach was needed to tackle youth crime. Last November I launched Time For Action, a clarion call to every youth organisation, educational institution, and government body in the capital to work in new ways to support youngsters, boost their access to opportunities, and roll back the tide of offending.

Twelve months on, after close working with the police, Ministry of Justice, local government, and youth justice bodies, we are now in a position to open the Heron Unit - a major Time For Action project in Feltham's Young Offenders Institution equipped with the tools to turn around the lives of thousands of youngsters.

Each young person on the Heron Unit will be given individual support and a programme of education and skills training, anger management and structured activities to prepare them for release. On leaving custody they will be given help securing jobs, and accessing further education and accommodation. In short, the life skills and support they need to turn their backs on crime and get back on the right track.

Some may argue that we are throwing good money at bad kids. But they are wrong. The rate of re-offending for youngsters leaving custody stands at a shocking 75 per cent. This is coupled with the average of £55,000 that it costs to detain each young offender for a year. It makes

sense both economically and socially to break young people out of the cycle of crime.

Time For Action doesn't just focus on those in trouble. It recognises the importance of a good education and the benefits of inspiring and challenging young people to raise their sights, giving them the confidence and skills to fulfil their potential. I am taking a number of steps to drive this forward.

For example I have launched my Academies programme, responding to local authorities' desire to tackle underachieving schools. And my plans for a £30 million three year investment programme in sporting activities are already taking shape.

But it's not just the politicians who have a role in tackling these issues - we all do. A great opportunity for Londoners to get involved is to lend a hand volunteering. Groups like the scouts, girl guides and the police cadets, desperately need more adult volunteers to give our young people guidance and direction.

One year on, Time For Action has delivered the groundwork for a long-term fundamental change in the way we support young people. Together we will unleash the talents of thousands of young people who have so much to offer.



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

2 Background

Rates of both knife crime and youth violence in the capital have fallen over the past year. The number of teenage murders in London has dropped by almost two-thirds compared to the preceding 12 months, and we have seen a six per cent reduction overall in serious youth violence.

As the elected voice for London, the Mayor is providing leadership on crime and youth violence, and the public expects the Mayor to take this work forward as one of the key issues affecting quality of life in the capital.

As we stated in our recent Time for Action update, London is unique. Not all national strategies work as well in the capital as in other parts of the country; similarly, youth violence in London requires a different response.

The challenges for delivery in London are also exceptional: London has the largest number of local authorities of any region in the UK, our statutory agencies have different reporting lines to those operating in other regions, and our police force holds responsibilities that stretch beyond the capital.

We have learnt from speaking with young people and their parents of the terrible effects of crime and violence on individual victims, their families, and society as a whole. We must not tolerate serious youth violence or somehow accept its inevitability, because left unchallenged it turns whole communities towards mistrust and caution.

This is why we are unapologetic for our support for strong enforcement: we are concerned not only about the offender, but also the criminal

act and the resultant victims who too often go on to offend themselves as a consequence. We want public spaces that people feel they own and a criminal justice system that people have confidence in.

Operations such as Blunt 2 remain controversial, and many understandably feel uneasy about the increased use of stop and search. But there is a need for immediate action here and now, and the response is justified: since last November, 7,500 knives have been taken off the street and 14,700 arrests have been made. And thanks to increased policing on public transport, crime on buses in the capital is now at its lowest level for five years.

We firmly believe in our joint approach of robust policing in the short-term, coupled with a sustained focus on providing solutions to youth violence in the long-term.

Alongside his support for robust enforcement, the Mayor is also keen to see more effort to 'turn off the tap' and preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

Thanks to the work of our partners, some of our plans under Time for Action are now well on their way to completion. Previously disparate agencies are now pooling their resources and expertise to turn around the lives of young offenders, thanks to the Mayor's leadership.

We are committed to working collaboratively, plugging the gaps missed by existing provision, and challenging the status quo to ensure the capital's agencies are delivering the results that Londoners deserve.

3 Project Daedalus

Background

Though the Mayor of London has no formal powers over prisons, he does have an interest in their effectiveness. It is the same interest that 7.5 million Londoners have: an interest first and foremost for community safety and public order, and an interest that those who are locked up at great expense are turned around, wherever possible.

Through Project Daedalus, the Mayor called for additional investment at key points of the justice system in order to achieve significant savings further down the line: reduced re-offending, reduced spend on subsequent stretches in custody, and most importantly, reduced costs to the lives of Londoners.

We want to see real progress on tackling offending behaviour while young offenders are in custody. Many enter without having developed basic skills, and we also want to ensure that they do not return for want of shortcomings in employability.

The project has demanded a huge amount of work behind the scenes: more than 16 organisations (including six London boroughs) have worked together constructively to build consensus and deliver the benefits.

The November 2009 opening of the Unit proves what can be accomplished with the support of partners: the government's bricks and mortar, the third sector's expertise, and our determination to effect change on behalf of Londoners.

Though we have provided the vision and political leadership, Londoners have profited

from the commitment of the London Criminal Justice Board, Ministry of Justice (particularly the Youth Justice Board and the National Offender Management Service) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).

Furthermore, we have appointed a consortium of experienced third sector organisations to provide our Resettlement Brokers: Rathbone, St Giles Trust and St Mungo's, with £2.5 million from the London Development Agency (LDA).

And the six 'Diamond District' boroughs of Croydon, Hackney, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham and Southwark have provided fantastic local support, particularly on resettlement.

What we're doing

Situated separately to the other wings, the newly opened Heron Unit accommodates young people who have shown a strong motivation to change their behaviour, with a particular emphasis on those in custody for the first time.

The new Unit runs a challenging range of programmes and activities geared at improving young offenders' life skills, personal responsibility, and employment prospects.

Six additional Feltham staff work on the Unit to ensure that the young people there are making greater use of their time, and improving the quality of training for young offenders.

We know that resettlement into the community is absolutely critical to the outcomes of young people leaving custody – it is simply too important to get wrong.

The new resettlement brokers have a key role to play in providing seamless support on release in order to steer young people away from an old cycle of committing further crimes. They will ensure that young offenders leaving the Heron Unit move into training and jobs to reduce their chances of re-offending.

Though based in the six participating boroughs, the resettlement brokers also spend time on the Unit to ensure that those leaving custody have jobs, training and homes to return to upon release.

The LDA has funded two additional non-uniformed staff on the Unit to better address the more complex problems that young offenders can bring with them. A family support coordinator will be based on the Unit, and a treatment manager will coordinate programmes to address their offending behaviour and anger management.

Working with the prison governor, educational establishments and employers, we will see more use of day release schemes to allow young offenders in custody to attend the college or job interviews which will be crucial in helping them to progress after release.

Already, Project Daedalus is offering success stories: one inmate released from Feltham moved straight into a college course the next day, which he had obtained by attending an interview on day-release.

Assessment

Young people are accepted onto the Heron Unit only if they show sufficient motivation to change their behaviour to move on with their

lives when they are released, with the focus being on those who are new to custody.

Following an initial assessment, those who meet the selection criteria can come straight from court if they are on a short sentence, while other suitable candidates who are in custody for longer periods of time can move onto the Unit a few months before release.

As a resettlement Unit, Heron supports young people at the end of their sentence so that any learning, training or other activities they are engaged in can continue when they move back into the community.

Regime

There is a separate daily routine for those on the Heron Unit, compared to those based elsewhere in Feltham and other young offenders' institutions. Combining a more intensive regime with practical skills learning and education, Project Daedalus delivers:

- Tailored group and individual programmes, using established cognitive behavioural models around anger management, offending behaviour, family support, mental health and substance misuse.
- Enhanced education and training both in the Unit and in the community, including preparation for employment using day-release opportunities so young people can move into a job immediately after being released.
- Strictly structured daily routines, including early starts and an emphasis on building shared responsibilities for any misbehaviour to promote team-building and an appreciation of consequences.

4 Other projects

Though this report coincides with the official opening of the Heron Unit, we have also been hard at work with our delivery partners on Time for Action's other projects. Further details on each of the projects is available in our September 2009 update report, and updates on each will be published as they come online.

Project Brodie

We have established a formal partnership with London Councils to increase attendance in schools by focusing on three interlinked themes. Firstly, reducing bullying and the violent behaviour of some pupils who make others feel unsafe to go to school. Secondly, reducing absences through early intervention, promoting relevant curricula, and building resilience. Thirdly, enforcing attendance where preventative measures fail: a joint role for local authorities and the MPS.

With the assistance of the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS), our recent survey found that approaches to enforcing attendance across London vary wildly. We have enlisted the help of the London Children & Young People Partnership, whose membership is now prioritising truancy. And we have also assembled a delivery group, drawing membership from London Councils, the MPS, LDA, Government Office for London, and ALDCS, to ensure that Project Brodie complements these existing efforts.

Project Titan

Project Titan calls for more emphasis in developing what used to be known as 'character' in young people, and uniformed youth groups

such as the Volunteer Police Cadets (VPC) have proved they can make a real difference. Sitting alongside the MPS, the VPC offers challenging opportunities to young people from all walks of life, including those at risk from crime and social exclusion. The Mayor supports the VPC and will back them in their push to increase membership from 1,300 to 4,000 across London by 2012.

We also support the good work of the London Fire Brigade's Community Fire Cadets, a comprehensive 18-month scheme aimed at young people aged 14 to 18. Already successfully operating in three boroughs, we want to help expand their work to reach young people across the whole of London. Their 'LiFE' programme is another excellent initiative that features an intensive, week-long course that aims to turn around the lives of young people involved in anti-social behaviour.

Project Oracle

We want to see a step change in the way efforts to tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour are funded and delivered in London, and we have secured the assistance of the statutory, academic, private and third sectors to help us realise our goal.

Project Oracle has the potential to change our regional way of working, and we are developing an evaluation standard, with a self-assessment toolkit, to support projects. We will also launch a web-based repository of 'what really works' in March 2010.

We want to foster a regional approach to evaluating responses to youth crime, and help to

identify the most promising approaches. And by commissioning new research and evaluations, we want to better understand the underlying causes of problems in London.

Mayor's Scholars

We know that educational results for young people in care fluctuate considerably across London. In March this year the Mayor signed the London Pledge for children and young people in care and, through the City Charter, we are now working to raise the levels of all boroughs. The Mayor's Scholars programme seeks to raise the ambitions both of the children themselves and those that work with them.

We will achieve this by setting up a 'near-peer' mentoring scheme, which will train up care leavers in university to become mentors to children in care.

We are also planning event programmes, including training and careers fairs for teenagers in care approaching their GCSEs, and an event for practitioners to bridge the gap between educational and social care professionals.

Academies

The Mayor is committed to up to ten new Academies to promote high quality vocational education in London. They will focus on improving academic achievement, and will commit to ensuring that all graduates move into further education, training or employment.

Work is underway to set up a Mayor's Academy Trust which, together with education providers, will co-sponsor each of the Academies. We

hope to open the first two Mayoral Academies in 2010.

Apprentices

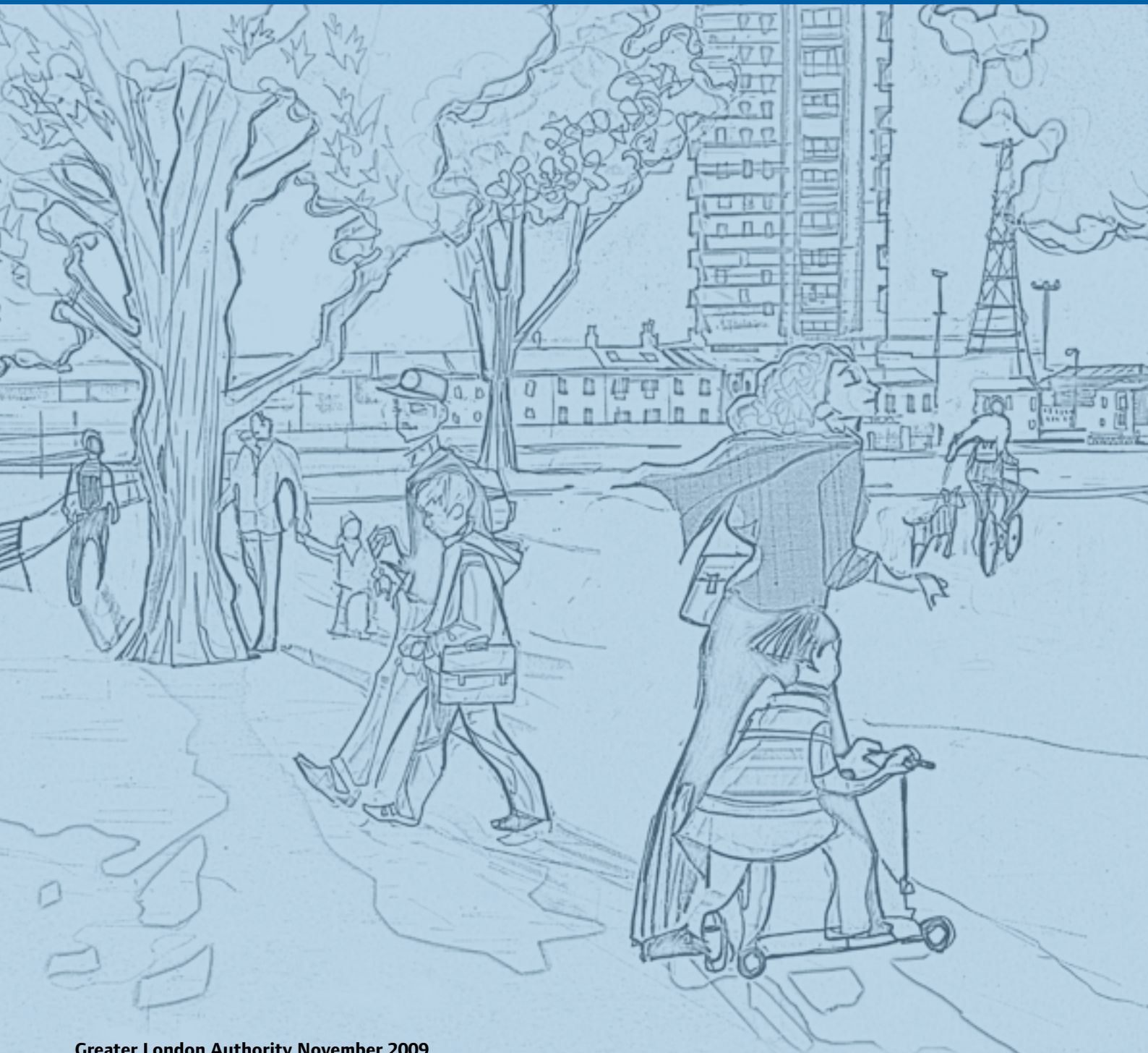
We want to expand the number of apprenticeships in London to provide young people with the right skills to open up jobs for them. The Mayor is leading by example: over the next three years, his agencies and their contractors will take on 3,000 apprentices.

We also recognise the importance of helping more young people develop the skills they need to become apprentices. This is why the LDA is commissioning a £4.6 million pre-apprenticeship scheme to support young Londoners to gain the skills to become apprentices.

Sport and music

The Mayor's sports legacy plan, 'A Sporting Future for London', commits to providing over £30 million for grass roots sport and activity across London. Chaired by Commissioner for Sport Kate Hoey, a new forum has been set up to support the plan, in line with Time for Action's call for more sporting opportunities for young people.

'Cultural Metropolis', the Mayor's direction of travel statement for the capital, sets out his ambitions for the visual and performing arts, music, galleries, museums, and the creative industries.



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