

**Local Government  
New Zealand**  
*te pūtahi matakōkiri*



## Guidelines for Councils:

Identifying, assessing and addressing gang issues

*Local Government New Zealand*  
114–118 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6011,  
PO Box 1214, Wellington 6140, New Zealand  
Phone: 64 4 924 1200 Fax: 64 4 924 1230  
[www.lgnz.co.nz](http://www.lgnz.co.nz)

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ISBN 978-1-877144-23-3 (hard copy)  
ISBN 978-1-877144-25-7 (pdf)

This report was prepared by Bev James, of Public Policy and Research Ltd, and Kay Saville-Smith, of CRESA, for *Local Government New Zealand*, with support from the Ministry of Justice.  
Editing and layout: Sue Hallas.



## Foreword from *Local Government New Zealand*



There is increasing community concern about the presence and activities of gangs. Central and local government and community groups have a range of responses to addressing gang-related crime and violence.

Local government plays a major role in achieving social

outcomes for communities and these outcomes have taken on increasing priority for local government in recent years. Many issues are best tackled through central and local government working together.

The development of these guidelines arose as a response to concern about gang-related issues as one of a number of key social concerns identified by the Central Government Local Government Social Sector Forum<sup>1</sup>. Central and local government have cooperated on a number of joint priority social issues through the Forum.

*Local Government New Zealand* (LGNZ) has prepared these guidelines for local government leaders, council managers and staff, other agencies operating locally, and community leaders. LGNZ acknowledges the contribution made by the Ministry of Justice in funding this initiative.

These guidelines complement the *Youth Gangs: a local response* toolkit, which is a best practice resource for responding to reports of youth gang activity.

Councils can apply these guidelines to tackle gang issues in their communities through articulating a common vision, bringing together key agencies and community interests, and helping to forge solutions.

The guidelines are based on experience, using the knowledge from New Zealand councils as well as international practice.

The guidelines are not prescriptive but offer a variety of options, information and insights into how gang-related issues and activities may be addressed in local communities.

There are no quick and easy solutions. International research and best practice suggest that gangs are, in part, a response to community dysfunction, and it takes time to develop safe and pro-social environments in neighbourhoods and communities.

Councils have specific roles and responsibilities that limit the range of responses they are able to implement with regard to gangs; nevertheless, various responses are possible.

Many of the approaches currently used by councils are not specifically directed to gangs, but are targeted to improving outcomes for the community as a whole. Reductions in crime and violence and increasing safety in public places benefit not only those at risk of the impacts of gangs but all local residents and businesses.

The international literature on effective responses to gang issues emphasises the need for 'catalytic leaders' such as elected representatives who can focus attention on the issues, engage people and bring them together, stimulate ideas for action and sustain momentum. Councils that are able to mobilise community leadership through their own leadership efforts have one of the most effective ways of addressing gang issues.

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<sup>1</sup> The Forum included the deputy secretaries or their deputies from Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Housing New Zealand Corporation, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education along with five Metro Sector local government representatives (Porirua, Manukau, Waitakere, Wellington, Hutt, Dunedin and LGNZ).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Yule', written in a cursive style.

Lawrence Yule  
President *Local Government New Zealand*

## Foreword from the Ministry of Justice



The practical advice and resources available through LGNZ's *Guidelines for councils: Identifying, assessing and addressing gang issues* should be welcomed by all local body authorities and communities across New Zealand.

Since becoming Minister of Justice, my immediate priorities have included increasing public safety and decreasing fear of crime amongst our communities. As such, I welcome the release of these guidelines as another step in this process. Antisocial and criminal activities associated with adult gangs are insidious, and so require a comprehensive, integrated response.

Councils play an important role in contributing to public safety and mitigating local problems associated with adult gangs. Giving communities full information on the range of tools available to address problem areas is a critical part of keeping our communities safe. The guidelines represent an important resource outlining the range of responses to gangs that are available to councils.

The guidelines describe international experience, and document the variety of resources and responsibilities which are being used by New Zealand local authorities to address adult gang issues. Councils will be able to consider their local environment and apply actions that have been proven to work in other areas. The guidelines also offer practical advice on monitoring and evaluating the success of responses used by councils.

Included in the regulatory responses available to councils are recently introduced powers relating to the removal of gang fortifications and other such intimidating structures under the Local Government Act 2002. This is an important measure given the role fortifications and other such structures play in cloaking illegal activity, and the way in which their very presence makes a neighbourhood feel less safe.

Other measures provided through the 2009 gangs and organised crime legislation include tougher sentencing for participation in a criminal gang, by increasing the period of imprisonment attached to the offence and making such participation an aggravating factor in sentencing for other crimes.

We have also recently passed legislation to enhance the detection of proceeds of crime through the financial system (the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Act 2009), and improve the Police's ability to confiscate property obtained through crime (Criminal Proceeds (Recovery) Act 2009).

We are progressing reform of laws to enhance the ability of enforcement agencies to monitor and search for criminal activity. Collectively, these new laws will help to remove profit from crime and remove criminals from our communities.

This Government is committed to addressing the problems of gangs. The guidelines will support the Government's aim of providing a comprehensive, integrated response to reducing the negative impacts of adult gang activities on our communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Power'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and 'P'.

Honourable Simon Power  
Minister of Justice

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## 1. What are these guidelines?

Councils can play a pivotal role in tackling gang issues in their communities through articulating a common vision, bringing together key agencies and community interests, and helping to forge solutions.

This document is designed to assist councils that are keen to develop local responses to mitigate and/or eliminate the negative impacts of adult gang activities on their communities. It complements *Youth Gangs: Local Responses Guidelines* published by the Ministry of Social Development.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 THESE GUIDELINES ARE BASED ON EXPERIENCE

The guidelines are based on three sets of knowledge.

1. Case studies of nine territorial authorities in New Zealand that are taking an active approach to gang-related issues in their communities. Those councils are:
  - Waitakere City<sup>2</sup>
  - Manukau City<sup>2</sup>
  - Hamilton City
  - Waipa District
  - Kawerau District
  - Napier City
  - Wanganui District
  - Palmerston North City
  - Timaru District.
2. Information from a survey of territorial authorities in which they reported their initiatives targeted to managing gang activities. This survey was undertaken online by LGNZ in July 2009 and was responded to by 54 of New Zealand's 74 territorial authorities, a response rate of 74 per cent.
3. A brief review of best practice in responding to gang issues in some selected overseas jurisdictions, particularly the United States and United Kingdom (section 3, this report).

These sources of information show not only that many councils are faced with gang issues (of varying degrees of seriousness), but also that many councils are actively working on those issues or planning for how they can

address the risks presented by antisocial and criminal gang activities in their communities. Often councils' responses are not exclusively targeted to adult gangs, but are focused on best practice in service delivery and using their regulatory and other powers to the fullest extent to achieve community safety and well-being. These guidelines also show that the negative impacts of gangs can be mitigated through a mix of intervention, prevention and enforcement.

### 1.2 HOW THESE GUIDELINES ARE ORGANISED

The guidelines are structured as follows. Section 2 focuses on the nature of gang activities in communities and the implications for the well-being and governance of communities.

Section 3 describes international models of local government responses to gangs, which have been found to be effective in helping local communities to deal with the range of problems that gang activities can present.

Section 4 outlines what New Zealand councils are currently doing to respond to gang issues in their key regulatory, service and programme delivery, community leadership, facilitative and co-operative roles.

Section 5 provides a matrix to show how the roles of New Zealand's territorial authorities in relation to gang activities can be understood in a systematic manner.

Sections 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 elaborate on the content of section 4, providing details of the various approaches and actions that councils in New Zealand are undertaking.

Section 11 identifies the important factors that allow councils to successfully develop and implement effective responses to gang issues.

Finally, Section 12 considers how to monitor and evaluate whether efforts are successful, what they achieve and what can be learned.

### 1.3 USING THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are not prescriptive. They offer a variety of options, information and insights into how gang-related issues and activities may be addressed in local communities. In using these guidelines, councils and communities need to be aware of the following:

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.lgnz.co.nz/projects/Socialand-CommunityIssues/CommunitySafety/MSD.pdf> (viewed 11 Aug 2010).

<sup>2</sup> From November 2010, Waitakere City Council and Manukau City Council became part of Auckland Council.

- There are regional and local variations in gang issues, so a standard approach will not meet the needs of all communities.
- Adult and youth gang issues are often connected, as adult gangs can provide pathways into crime for young people. Consequently, community responses to both adult and youth gangs may need to be developed and undertaken together.
- There are no quick and easy solutions. International research and best practice suggest that gangs are, in part, a response to community dysfunction, and it takes time to develop safe and pro-social environments in neighbourhoods and communities.
- Many of the approaches currently used by councils are not specifically directed to gangs, but are targeted to improving outcomes for the community as a whole. Reductions in crime and violence and increasing safety in public places benefit not only those at risk of the impacts of gangs but all local residents and businesses.
- Responses need to have widespread community support and involvement to be successful.
- Councils have specific roles and responsibilities that limit the range of responses they are able to implement with regard to gangs; nevertheless, various responses are possible. It is also acknowledged that a council needs to weigh up its responses with the community's priorities and be prudent in the use of resources.

#### **1.4 WHO SHOULD USE THESE GUIDELINES?**

Elected representatives (mayors, councillors and community board members) as well as council managers and staff will all find something in these guidelines to assist them in fulfilling their council roles. Although elected representatives and council officers may have different roles, all are involved in articulating and implementing the council's agreed response in a consistent way.

##### **Mayors, councillors and community board members**

Mayors, councillors and community board members represent their communities and often have close relationships with their constituents, which give them important insights

into gang activities and / or perceptions and anxieties around gangs in their communities.

Elected representatives impact on the way in which gang-related issues are addressed through their leadership role. They can influence community knowledge and understanding about the risks and implications of antisocial and criminal gang activities, and facilitate government agencies and community organisations working together. In addition, elected representatives make decisions about what needs to happen to benefit their communities through the activities and programmes that the council will undertake annually and through the Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP); and policies, rules and by-laws.

These guidelines provide elected representatives with a range of options useful in both regards.

##### **Council managers**

Effectively addressing gang issues in communities inevitably challenges the organisational capabilities and capacity of councils. Councils are required to develop a consistent position on gangs and consistent responses to gangs across all council activities, from enforcing compliance with regulations and by-laws to delivery of services and programmes.

These guidelines provide council managers with a way of framing council activities and identifying how council staff could be involved in addressing gang-related issues in the context of their specific roles and responsibilities.

##### **Council staff**

One of the themes emerging from both international research on responding to gangs, as well as the information on how New Zealand councils respond to gang-related issues, is the way in which addressing gangs in local communities involves council staff across a wide range of council activities.

These guidelines can help staff – whether they have responsibilities, for instance, for building consents or dog control or community development or are planners concerned with district plans or officers involved in environmental health – to see how their roles contribute to strengthening effective responses to antisocial and criminal gang activities.

## 2. Why worry about gangs?

Communities and their councils worry about gangs for all sorts of reasons, sometimes attributing community problems to the activities of gangs. It is worth noting, however, that not all problems popularly talked about as gang related are actually generated by gangs. In addition, there may be some problems that are largely unrecognised by councils as being connected with gang activities.

The very first step in dealing with community problems that appear to be associated with gangs is to establish whether in fact the problem is related to gang activities. To do that, councils need to understand what a gang is in the local context; what are 'gang problems;' and what the negative impacts of gangs on the community are.

### 2.1 WHAT IS A GANG?

Defining what is a gang is by no means straightforward. Internationally, and here in New Zealand, the definition of what constitutes a gang is frequently contested.<sup>3</sup> However, broadly, it may be said that gangs have the following characteristics. They:

- are recognised as a distinct group within the community
- promote themselves as a distinct group, often with an identity related to territory
- define who is a member, and participants in gang activities define themselves as actual or prospective gang members or associates
- are involved in enough illegal activity or antisocial behaviour to get a consistent and negative response from law enforcement bodies and local residents.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.2 GANG PREVALENCE IN NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Police Association estimates that there are over 3000 full members of traditional gangs in New Zealand, as well as youth or street gangs, although the numbers of youth or street gangs are hard to estimate.<sup>5</sup>

Of the 54 councils that responded to the LGNZ survey, a large majority (45 councils, or

83 per cent) reported the presence of gangs in their areas. One quarter identified only adult gangs, while almost one half identified both youth and adult gangs. However, only eight of 54 councils reported that gangs were a "very" or "fairly big" problem for their communities. Over one third of councils (19 councils) reported that gang-related behaviours constituted a "moderate" problem. Almost a third reported that gang-related issues were a "slight" problem (Table 1).

**Table 1: Councils' assessment of the extent of gang-related issues in their area**

Extent of gang-related issues	Number of councils (n=54)	Proportion of councils (per cent)
A very big problem	3	6
A fairly big problem	5	9
A moderate problem	19	35
A slight problem	17	32
Not a problem	10	19
Total	54	101*

\* Total is greater than 100 per cent due to rounding.

### 2.3 GANGS AND PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS

Gangs become a problem not because they exist, but either because they engage in criminal or antisocial behaviours and / or because people feel intimidated by them or feel that they are unable to lead positive, productive and peaceful lives because of a gang presence.

Antisocial behaviour tends to generate feelings of public anxiety and fear. However, it must also be said that public anxiety and fear can persist even when gangs are not overtly acting in antisocial or illegal ways.

Indeed, one of the themes emerging from the case studies and the survey is that public fear and anxiety are generated by communities finding it difficult to deal with young people, their apparel and their tendency to "hang out together" in public spaces. These behaviours frequently prompt public debate about gang presence.

By way of contrast, some adult gangs have a very low public profile but have members who are nevertheless involved in a wide variety of illegal activities (see next page) that can have profoundly negative impacts on local communities.

<sup>3</sup> p. 9, Greene, J. and Pranis, K. 2007.

<sup>4</sup> p. xiv, Bureau of Justice Assistance. 1999a; p. 6, Brand, A. and Ollerearnshaw, R. 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Police Association Submission to the Gangs and organised Crime Bill. Submitted to the Law and Order Committee, 27 March 2009.

**Table 2: Gang-related activities reported by councils\*, ranked by proportion of councils reporting them**

Activities with gang-related involvement	Number of councils (n=54)	Proportion of councils (per cent)
Drug distribution	37	69
Theft, burglary, property offences	31	57
Recruitment and prospecting for gang membership	29	54
Domestic violence	26	48
Drug manufacture	25	46
Public feeling intimidated by public behaviour of gang members and/or patches	23	43
Keeping aggressive dogs	21	39
Other**	20	37
No activities selected	10	19
Inter-gang violence	10	19
Violence against non-gang members or general public	10	19
Businesses intimidated by public behaviour of gang members and/or patches	8	15
Fortification of gang premises	6	11
Organised dog fighting	2	4

\* Councils could tick multiple activities.

\*\* Includes prostitution, "boy racers", money laundering, vehicle/traffic-related offences.

There is strong international evidence to suggest that gangs are involved in a wide range of criminal activities including violence, drug manufacture and distribution, as well as property crimes and firearms offences.<sup>6</sup>

In New Zealand, gangs are responsible for a significant amount of: violent crime; drug importation, manufacture and supply; property crime; arms offences; and organised criminal activity.<sup>7</sup> Three-quarters of offenders associated with clandestine drug laboratories identified by police in 2006 were linked to recognised gangs.<sup>8</sup> Gangs have also been linked with paua poaching.<sup>9</sup>

Surveyed councils were asked to identify activities in their area where there was significant gang-related involvement. Among councils, the most common gang-related activities reported concerned drugs. Over two-thirds of councils reported drug

distribution associated with gangs in their area, while almost half identified drug manufacture by gangs in their area.

Over half of the councils reported property offences committed by gang members, and gangs recruiting and prospecting in their area. Domestic violence was identified by almost half of the councils, while violence against the general public was identified by one fifth of councils. One fifth of councils also reported inter-gang violence in their area (Table 2).

## 2.4 IMPACT OF NEGATIVE GANG BEHAVIOURS ON COMMUNITIES

There is increasing recognition overseas that gang activities can negatively impact on local communities and the well-being of their residents.<sup>10</sup> Impacts can be generated by activities that are not necessarily criminal – they often involve gang members' non-compliance with civil requirements and social expectations of neighbourliness and good citizenship. Impacts include both economic and social costs. Estimates of those costs

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Justice 1999a; Brand, A. and Ollerearnshaw, R. 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Bellamy, P. 2009; Gangs and Organised Crime Bill 10-1 (2009), Government Bill Explanatory note.

<sup>8</sup> Newton, A. 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Gangs and Organised Crime Bill 10-1 (2009), Government Bill Explanatory note.

<sup>10</sup> Wyrick, P. and Howell, J. 2004; McGloin, J. 2005; Howell, J. 2006; Erickson, K. et al. 2007.

provide a measure of the impact of crime on society. Public costs include: core justice sector costs relating to the Police, the courts, the departments of corrections and youth justice, Child, Youth and Family; health sector costs relating to injuries to victims requiring medical treatment; and costs borne by other public sector agencies such as the New Zealand Customs Service, the Ministry of Fisheries, the New Zealand Fire Service and the Ministry of Education.

Private and non-profit sectors also bear the costs of crime, including individuals, households, businesses and non-profit organisations dealing with the consequences of crime.<sup>11</sup> Local government also bears the costs of crime, including costs relating to crime prevention, vandalism and graffiti, and enforcement of liquor and other by-laws.

New Zealand does not have a standard method of estimating the full costs of crime. It should also be noted that the proportion of crime that can be attributed to gangs, and the costs associated with that crime, can not be analysed using current data as there are constraints on the amount of detailed contextual information that can be reliably and practically collected at an operational level.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, defining what constitutes a gang or a gang member results in measurement difficulties.

The first comprehensive analysis of the costs of crime in New Zealand was done by the Treasury using 2003/04 figures. This analysis gives some indication of the costs associated with crime that might be attributable to gangs, given evidence that gangs are responsible for a significant amount of violent crime; drug importation, manufacture and supply; property crime; arms offences; and organised criminal activity in New Zealand.

The Treasury estimated that, in 2003/04: violent offences had cost a total of \$2.7 billion; offences against private property, \$3.7 billion; and drug offences, \$129 million.<sup>13</sup> In 2005/06, illicit drug use was estimated to

have caused \$1.31 billion of social costs in New Zealand.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps most importantly for councils, however, is that many within communities believe that criminal activities, including those associated with gangs, can destabilise communities and can lead to people leaving communities and removing their investment from those communities.

Also, criminal activities use critical resources in communities, and compromise the potential and well-being of people that live in those communities. Research in Counties Manukau schools, for instance, found that schools incur considerable financial costs in preventing vandalism and ensuring student safety. Costs include security guards, electronic surveillance and fences.<sup>15</sup>

In another study, Otago young people reported that one of the key issues impacting on their lives was avoiding the negative influence of gangs and feeling safe.<sup>16</sup>

Councils have a problem if gangs dominate the life of their communities and if "simply living in an area can substantially increase a young person's risk of gang involvement."<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Local authorities responding to gangs: international experiences

Gangs often emerge in fragile communities and can disorganise and undermine community life further. A number of societal and structural drivers have been found to influence gang formation and membership, including low economic growth and high unemployment; high levels of social deprivation; social disorganisation; exclusion from, and barriers to, accessing resources (such as education, health services, social services and employment opportunities); and processes of colonialism.<sup>18,19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Roper, T. and Thompson, A. 2006.

<sup>12</sup> The New Zealand Police and Department of Corrections collect data on gang membership of offenders, however the data are not robust (see Statistics New Zealand *Review of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics Report 2009*).

<sup>13</sup> Roper, T. and Thompson, A. 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Gangs and Organised Crime Bill 10-1 (2009), Government Bill Explanatory note.

<sup>15</sup> p. 26, Ministry of Social Development. 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Fleming, T. et al. 2008.

<sup>17</sup> p. 27, Brand, A. and Ollerearnshaw, R. 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Marsh, E. 1982; Curry, G., and Thomas, R. 1992 ; Fagan J. 1990.

<sup>19</sup> Jackson, M. 1998.

Various individual risk factors increase the likelihood of gang involvement, such as early drug use, low self-esteem and feelings of alienation. Familial risk factors include: poverty; child abuse and neglect; poor parental supervision; and gang involvement of family members.<sup>20</sup>

*Because gangs thrive in disorganised communities, any local intervention must rally the community to organise and work together.*<sup>21</sup>

It is in the context of fragile and disorganised communities that local authorities have become important catalysts in addressing the impact of gang activities. In the United States, there has been a growing emphasis on a bottom-up, community-based approach and on co-ordinated inter-agency strategies for addressing gang-related problems. These approaches are also starting to be used in the United Kingdom.<sup>22</sup>

Broadly, overseas experience shows that local government brings three main strengths to addressing gang issues.

- Councils are territorially based. They carry out critical functions and responsibilities within a geographical area. By their very nature, gangs are also territorially based, and their impacts are local. Consequently, councils have authority to address those local impacts.
- Councils know their area and know what will work in their area. Councils are very well placed to identify the sorts of local responses that are needed and to be important catalysts in the development of those responses.
- Councils can bring people together and facilitate working together. Councils have an important role in ensuring that communities are well organised and that members work together. They are well placed to bring together government agencies and community groups.

Strategies used overseas to reduce or eliminate gang-related criminal activity tend to concentrate on three domains – prevention, intervention and suppression (what we call in these guidelines “enforcement”).<sup>23</sup>

The Spergel model is frequently adopted when communities wish to address gang issues. The Spergel model is a comprehensive community-wide model that uses multiple responses based on prevention, intervention and suppression.

That model and the local authorities that use it and other methods for incorporating prevention, intervention and suppression into their policies and practices, recognise that local authorities need to:

- develop skills in their own organisation through systematic organisational development and change
- promote community organisation and mobilisation
- provide an environment for active social intervention
- provide pro-social opportunities for individuals within their communities
- actively get involved in suppression and enforcement.<sup>24</sup>

It is generally acknowledged that while enforcement is important, prevention and intervention generate better outcomes that are more durable. However, prevention and intervention need to be supported by enforcement activities. Furthermore, it is equally true that enforcement appears to be most effective when combined in a larger strategy that includes prevention and intervention.<sup>25</sup> In fact, research supports such a multi-domain strategy.

The most successful efforts involve organisations working together, with a strong emphasis on addressing socio-economic drivers and social exclusion, and promoting community development in communities, including efforts to reduce the barriers to alternative, pro-social options.<sup>26</sup>

Local authorities have different roles in each of those domains and undertake different activities. Figure 1 (next page) sets out the domains and shows how they are used to deliver a comprehensive response.

The three domains can be defined as follows.

**Prevention** focuses on population groups at risk of gang involvement and participation.

<sup>20</sup> Lafontaine, T. et al. 2005.

<sup>21</sup> p. 2, Bureau of Justice Assistance. 1999b.

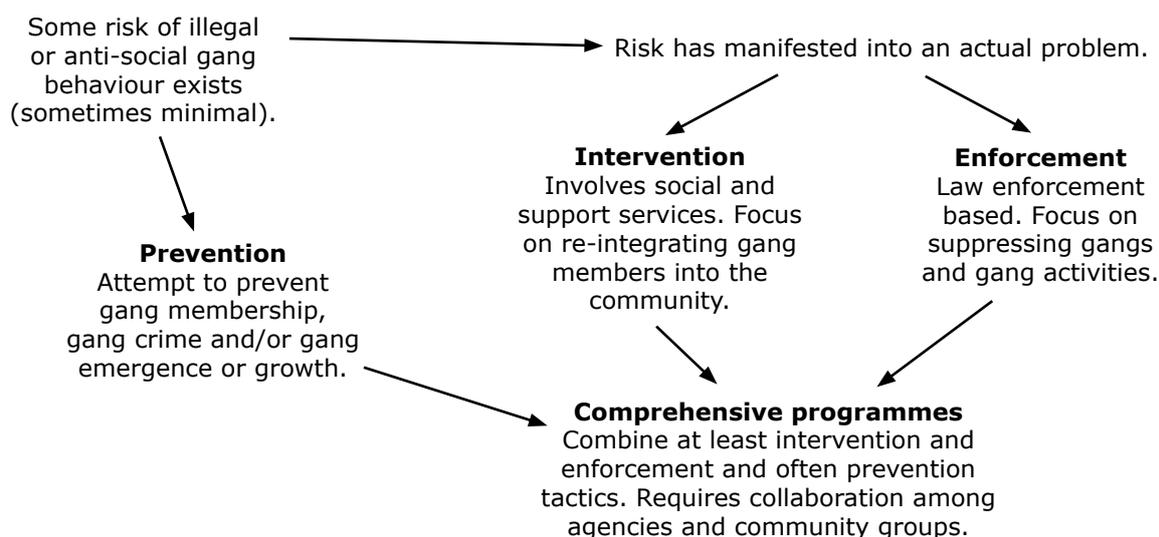
<sup>22</sup> See Brand, A. and Ollerearnshaw, R. 2008; and National Youth Gang Center. 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Bellamy, P. 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Bellamy, P. 2009.

<sup>25</sup> p. 6, McGloin, J. 2005.

<sup>26</sup> National Youth Gang Center. 2007; Lafontaine, T. et al. 2005.



**Figure 1: Prevention, intervention, enforcement and comprehensive programmes.** Source: Figure 1, McGloin, J. 2005: 3.

Prevention activities attempt to deter individuals from joining gangs and are often directed at addressing community dysfunction and underlying economic and social stresses that: allow criminal activity to flourish, lead communities to support or tolerate criminal behaviour and gang activities, and encourage the emergence of youth gangs.

Key components of prevention approaches are to strengthen community networks and infrastructures and to increase the capacity of a community to deal with gangs itself, particularly the community's ability to reduce the influence of gangs and demonstrate that criminal behaviour is not tolerated.

Overseas, local authorities support community efforts to develop safe and pro-social environments<sup>27</sup> through two types of preventative activities – primary prevention activities that focus on the entire community and secondary prevention activities that focus on children and young people at high risk of joining gangs.<sup>28</sup>

Overseas examples of preventative actions include:<sup>29</sup>

- establishing procedures for community members to report crimes
- dealing with school absenteeism

- setting up out-of-school programmes
- creating pro-social activities for children and youth
- setting up mentor programmes for children and youth, to establish good role models
- setting up family support programmes
- setting up parenting programmes
- setting up community safety and Neighbourhood Watch programmes
- providing job skills training and employment opportunities
- setting up training programmes for conflict resolution
- setting up anti-bullying programmes
- creating gang-free schools
- implementing anti-graffiti responses, to decrease gang visibility in communities
- improving access to health services, including mental health services
- providing information to children, parents and communities about the impacts of gangs. These programmes aim to demystify, and reduce the appeal of, gangs; raise awareness of risk; and provide young people with information to make informed choices.

**Intervention** targets individuals in gangs and those involved on the fringes of gangs, working with families, children and young people that are involved in gang lifestyles and with people who want to leave gangs. They involve providing people with opportunities for alternative, pro-social lifestyles and successful re-integration into the community.

<sup>27</sup> National Youth Gang Center. 2007.

<sup>28</sup> p. 44, Institute for Intergovernmental Research. 2009.

<sup>29</sup> See, for examples, The United States Conference of Mayors 2006; National Youth Gang Centre 2007; Howell, J. and Curry, G. 2009.

Overseas examples of intervention actions include:<sup>30</sup>

- setting up support, mentoring and counselling programmes for youth and families, to help them make positive choices
- targeting outreach to youth through detached workers who work directly with young people in the community
- setting up drug and alcohol treatment programmes
- setting up programmes for youth offenders such as employment and training, health services and counselling
- setting up support programmes targeted at reducing gang-related youth violence and death.<sup>31</sup>

Local authorities with health, welfare and education functions are often involved in intervention programmes. Where local authorities do not have direct delivery of social, welfare, health or education services, they are typically key players in facilitating local level co-operation between agencies with those responsibilities.

**Enforcement** is specifically associated with law enforcement and the suppression, deterrence and control of gangs. Key goals of enforcement approaches are the reduction of criminal activity and the removal of gang activities from the community.

Overseas examples of enforcement actions include:

- targeting policing and crime prevention initiatives to areas of high gang activity, referred to as “hot spots”<sup>32</sup>
- targeting private properties where criminal activity occurs with the use of abatement mechanisms<sup>33</sup>
- responding to reduce drive-by shootings<sup>34</sup>
- establishing and maintaining informal contact with targeted youth and their families
- patrolling areas where gangs congregate.

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<sup>30</sup> See, for examples, The United States Conference of Mayors 2006; National Youth Gang Centre 2007; Brand, A. and Ollerearnshaw, R. 2008; Howell, J. and Curry, G. 2009.

<sup>31</sup> For example, Caught in the Crossfire programme described on p. 5 of McGloin, J. 2005.

<sup>32</sup> For example, see National Youth Gang Center. 2007.

<sup>33</sup> For example, see Cristall, J. and Forman-Echolls, L. 2009.

<sup>34</sup> For example, see Dedel, K. 2007.

The role of local authorities in gang-related enforcement varies according to whether they have criminal enforcement responsibilities. Where they do not, local authorities can be, nevertheless, involved in enforcement through:

- establishing policies and by-laws aimed at controlling undesirable behaviours in public spaces and requiring police enforcement
- co-operating with enforcement agencies
- actively pursuing adequate compliance by gang members and gang-related activities with local authority regulatory requirements, which may range across planning, environmental health, liquor control, resource management and building regulations.

There is evidence that interventions involving people who have experiences in common and grass-roots connections with gangs can be successful, especially in programmes to engage youth in pro-social behaviours. Although including gang members in solutions may be controversial, there is some New Zealand evidence from evaluation of the Consultancy Advocacy Research Trust (CART) programme aimed at “hard-to-reach” youth, that this action has worked.<sup>35</sup> This programme was initiated because of a number of youth homicides in South Auckland and growing concern about escalating violence among youth. The programme successfully liaised with 65–80 hard-to-reach youth and whanau members from South Auckland. Quantifiable outcomes included a drop in arrests, reduction in theft, no engagement in street-based violent crime and assaults, and no engagement in binge drinking. However, since the programme ended, some antisocial and criminal behaviours have re-surfaced.<sup>36</sup>

For further reading on successful multi-dimensional, multi-agency approaches used overseas, see *Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems*, by the National Youth Gang Center (2007). This publication presents highlights of activities from the Gang Reduction Program sites. Its Appendix A presents an evaluation of six programmes. A key factor in the programmes that succeeded in reducing criminal behaviour was

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<sup>35</sup> Roguski, M. 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Roguski, M. 2009.

the length of time participants were engaged with the programme (engagement for two or more years yielded the best results). The evaluators concluded that a combination of prevention, intervention and enforcement approaches is most successful in reducing gang problems.

Also helpful is *Selected Annotated Bibliography: evaluations of gang intervention programs*, by Westmacott, Styce and Brown (2005). This review also concludes that among the most promising programmes are multi-component programmes such as the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project.

#### 4. Summary of what councils in New Zealand are doing

This section gives an overview of what councils are currently doing to respond to gang issues. It draws on both the LGNZ survey with councils as well the interviews and documentary material related to case studies in:

- Waitakere City
- Manukau City

- Hamilton City
- Waipa District
- Kawerau District
- Napier City
- Wanganui District
- Palmerston North City
- Timaru District.

This material has also been supplemented with information from other councils that illustrates particular activities that contribute to addressing gang-related issues.

#### 4.1 CURRENT AND PLANNED ACTIONS

In the survey of councils, over two-thirds listed actions in which they are involved that target gang members' activities or gang-related issues. Those actions are a mix of preventative actions, interventions and enforcement.

By far, the main action is related to community safety, healthy cities or community development, reported by 61 percent of councils (Table 3). Around one third of councils reported involvement in activities to deter young people from gang membership, and initiatives to target drug manufacture,

**Table 3: Activities targeting gang members' activities or gang-related issues, ranked by proportion of councils\* providing them**

Activity	Number of councils (n=54)	Proportion of councils (per cent)
Community safety, healthy cities or community development initiatives	33	61
Other	19	35
Policies and/or activities to deter young people from gang membership	17	32
Did not select any activities	17	32
Initiatives targeting family violence	16	30
Activity targeting crime	15	28
Work to reduce fear of/intimidation by gangs in public spaces and facilities	14	26
Economic development, training or employment initiatives	13	24
Housing-related initiatives	12	22
Health-based initiatives	12	22
Control of gang fortifications	7	13
Dog control activities targeting gang behaviour	6	11
Initiatives targeting drug manufacture, sale or use	3	6

\* Some councils provide multiple activities.

sale or use. About one-quarter of councils were involved in activities targeting crime and reducing fear of crime and intimidation in public places, and in economic development, employment or training initiatives.

Almost one third of councils did not report any actions, while over one third commented on "other" activities in which they were involved. These activities were either different to those asked about in the question or were elaborations of specific initiatives, and included working with police; setting up anti-graffiti programmes; providing public education about gangs, youth messages (eg "it's OK to say no to gangs"); mentoring high-risk youth; prohibiting gang insignia; running community patrols; and providing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) training.

Almost one third of councils (16) indicated that they used specific policies and planning instruments to address gang-related issues. Of those councils, 13 have specific strategies or action plans to address gang behaviour. Three councils have District Plan objectives, policies or rules that allow them to manage gang activities. Two councils reported including responses to gang issues in their LTCCPs.

Several councils commented that their actions were aimed at the general population, rather than specifically at gangs, and that those actions promoted an environment in which undesirable gang activities were likely to be reduced.

Ten councils were planning actions to address gang issues, including:

- setting up various programmes for at-risk youth and other young people, to encourage them to choose alternatives to gangs (seven councils)
- working in partnership with other organisations and the community to reduce gang activity (two councils)
- building on urban renewal activities (one council).

All case-study areas use several approaches, although some councils have focused more on some approaches than others. Infobox 1 (next page) outlines general approaches used by the case-study councils and gives some examples of specific actions.

Waitakere City took a multi-pronged approach to gangs, which was integrated into the city's broader policy frameworks related to the built environment and resource management; crime prevention and safer communities; and youth development.

Broadly, Manukau City Council actions were also multi-pronged and focused on reducing the attraction of gangs and gang-related activities to young people; supporting communities by maintaining surveillance, policing and the integrity of public spaces; and inter-agency co-ordination and facilitation.

Hamilton City's primary approach to dealing with gang-related issues is through youth development and community development initiatives. These include community safety initiatives, activities to deter young people from gang membership, and initiatives targeting family violence. The council has worked in collaboration with a number of other agencies to respond to community concerns about youth gangs. One example of a multi-faceted approach, of agencies working alongside the community, is community renewal in Enderley (Poets Corner), an area of high social and economic deprivation known for its gang connections.<sup>37</sup> The approach has included crisis management, and crime prevention, intervention and enforcement.

Waipa District's primary approach to dealing with gang-related issues is through its enforcement powers. In exercising those powers, council officers often work closely with police. Past problems with fortified properties used by gangs resulted in the council introducing a District Plan change that included control of fortified sites. The council also undertakes a number of general public safety measures including the elimination of graffiti, which appears to be associated with youth gang activity. When the District Plan is reviewed, the council will consider CPTED as part of urban design provisions. Currently, new projects such as upgrades of the central business district, new toilets and recreational facilities are designed using CPTED principles.

Kawerau District's main responses to gang-related issues have been to create a supportive community environment for

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<sup>37</sup> See Community Outcomes. 2008.

## Infobox 1: Approaches used by case-study councils\*

Council	Prevention	Intervention	Enforcement
Waitakere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development and community development programmes</li> <li>Youth events</li> <li>Community renewal – Massey</li> <li>Crime prevention plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council employment cadetships</li> <li>Auckland Youth Support Network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement of council rules and by-laws</li> </ul>
Manukau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development and community development programmes</li> <li>Drug-free and alcohol-free events</li> <li>Free swimming-pool access and sports initiatives</li> <li>Youth workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-agency co-operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of regulatory powers to manage safety in public places</li> </ul>
Hamilton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development and community development programmes</li> <li>Community renewal – Enderley</li> <li>Joint communication strategy with police and Ministry of Social Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-agency co-operation</li> <li>Improving Outcomes for Youth At-Risk Hamilton Action Plan</li> </ul>	
Waipa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime prevention</li> <li>CPTED</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement of council rules and by-laws</li> <li>Developing fortifications policies and rules</li> </ul>
Kawerau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development programme: Amazing Kidz in Kawerau</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-agency group (K-oper8) working one-on-one with at-risk young people and their families / whanau</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement of council rules and by-laws</li> </ul>
Napier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development and community development programmes</li> <li>Community renewal – Maraenui Urban Development Plan</li> <li>Crime reduction plan</li> <li>CPTED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ka Hao Te Rangatahi programme</li> <li>Inter-agency co-operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing safety in public places</li> </ul>
Wanganui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development and community development programmes</li> <li>Community Taskforce: Youth Wellbeing</li> <li>For Our Kids programme</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wanganui District Council (Prohibition of Gang Insignia) Act 2009</li> </ul>
Palmerston North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development and community development programmes</li> <li>Crime prevention plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-agency co-operation: strategic partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the Safety Advisory Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement of council rules and by-laws</li> <li>Tenant management</li> </ul>
Timaru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth development and community development programmes</li> <li>Project Y</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement of council rules and by-laws</li> <li>Discouraging display of gang insignia in public places</li> </ul>

\* Note that an empty cell in the table does not mean that a council carries out no action under that heading.

children and young people by providing positive alternatives to joining a gang. Agencies work one-on-one with at-risk young people and their families and whanau.

The council is actively involved in leading youth development and community development initiatives. As well, the council uses its enforcement powers as required to deal with regulatory breaches by gangs or individual gang members.

Napier City Council's primary approach to dealing with gangs is embedded within the framework of its broader policies related to strengthening communities and to its youth policy. The former has been concerned with revitalising communities and the amenities in those communities (such as shopping centres and marae), and providing safe public spaces.

Wanganui District Council has a stated "zero tolerance" policy towards gangs. The council's Community Outcomes explicitly state, under Community Outcome 2 (A safe community) that a key objective is that Wanganui is a safe place, free from gangs. The council uses the Wanganui District Council (Prohibition of Gang Insignia) Act 2009 to prohibit the display of gang insignia in specified places in the district. The council is also developing a youth and community development approach called For Our Kids, which involves a range of organisations and community representatives.

Palmerston North City's main approaches to gang issues have been to use community development and council powers of enforcement. There is a strong focus on preventative activities through initiatives for youth development and strengthening communities. There is also strong enforcement of regulations and by-laws such as those concerning liquor licensing and the Building Act 2004. The council works closely and co-operatively with community organisations and government agencies. A strategic partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the Safety Advisory Board (a group made up of government agencies and community organisations) has been a key mechanism in addressing gang issues.

The main actions used by Timaru District Council are preventative actions through youth development and community development initiatives, in order to provide alternative pathways for young people, rather than joining gangs. The council also enforces its

rules and by-laws, and has introduced some local measures, along with businesses, to discourage the display of gang insignia in public places.

## 4.2 RESOURCING COUNCIL RESPONSES TO GANGS

In the survey, 28 councils identified how their actions relating to gang issues were funded. The main funding sources were through rates (19 councils, or 35 per cent), and central government funding (13, or 24 per cent). A few councils also sourced funding through charitable sources (five councils), council business activities (three councils), and business donations or sponsorships (one council).

Of the 53 councils that provided information on council positions that have been dealing with gang issues as part of their role, over half (31) indicated that they had no staff involved. Eighteen councils reported having up to one FTE<sup>38</sup> position dealing with gang issues, while four councils have one or more FTE positions dealing with gang issues.

Sixteen councils commented on their staffing levels. Some identified positions that were specifically funded to work on programmes for at-risk youth or crime prevention and community safety, which were wider issues and not specifically gang related. Other councils noted that officers got involved with gang issues as part of their day-to-day business, including building consents and controls, dog control, noise control and community development.

## 5. Multiple roles for effective responses

Clearly from the case studies, we can say that there is considerable variation in the range and scope of programmes, actions and responses of territorial authorities in relation to gangs and gang activities in New Zealand.

Broadly, however, those responses are related to territorial authorities' five critical roles:

1. A regulatory role under a variety of acts including but not confined to the Local Government Act 2002, Resource

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<sup>38</sup> Full-time equivalent.

Management Act 1991, Health Act 1956 and the Building Act 2004.

2. A role in delivering services, programmes and policies that the council determines under the Local Government Act will promote the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of its community.
3. A role in providing local leadership and meeting the outcomes set out in the Local Government Act through articulating community values and goals, generating community support and motivating action.
4. A local facilitation role that involves establishing processes and mechanisms to encourage co-ordination, co-operation and information sharing among agencies working on gang issues.
5. A role in co-operating with other agencies whose activities promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of local communities. This involves the council actively supporting other agencies to carry out their roles and functions in addressing gang issues.

These council roles can be set into a matrix with the three domains of prevention, intervention and enforcement (Infobox 2).

## 6. Councils addressing gang issues in their regulatory role

The most common acts identified by councils (that responded to the survey) as enabling councils to respond to gang issues were the Local Government Act 2002 (identified by 24 of the councils), the Building Act 2004 (21 councils) and the Resource Management Act 1991 (21 councils).

Eight councils considered that there were no statutory tools that they could use to act on gang issues. A few councils had the impression that they could not undertake some actions, which in fact they are able to do under current legislation. For example, two councils considered they were unable to deal with gang fortifications. However, other councils have provisions to control fortifications in their District Plan.

In addition, the recently introduced Gangs and Organised Crime Act 2009 includes an amendment to the Local Government Act to increase powers relating to the removal of gang fortifications.

With regard to the actual use of statutory tools, 10 councils reported they used no statutory tools. For the remaining 44 councils, the most common act used was the Building Act (used by 15 councils), followed by the Local Government Act and the Resource Management Act, each used by 10 councils.

Other statutory tools that councils identified using were the Summary Offences (Tagging and Graffiti Vandalism) Amendment Act 2008, the Dog Control Act 1996 and, for Wanganui District Council, the Wanganui District Council (Prevention of Gang Insignia) Act 2009.

The case-study councils gave specific examples of regulatory responses relating to:

- close working relationships with police to enforce regulations
- tenant management
- use of council by-laws to control fortifications
- legislation.

### 6.1 CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICE TO ENFORCE REGULATIONS

Waitakere City Council found that a key factor in its successful response to gangs was the placement of sustained and active requirements on gangs that the houses and buildings they use comply with regulatory requirements. In terms of the built environment and resource management, the council actively required the rectification of non-compliance, which included the owners failing to get appropriate building consents, breaches of rules about fortification or site operations that were inconsistent with district planning and zoning requirements. Regulations around noise and dogs were actively enforced. Police officers were sometimes asked to escort council officers dealing with non-compliance matters.

In Manukau City, gangs heavily involved in illegal business generally tend to keep a relatively low profile in the community. Thus, while the council had regulatory powers to address gang house fortifications, these were very rarely needed. However, Manukau City Council used its regulatory powers to deal specifically with certain behaviours and the management of public spaces, such as the control of street prostitution, graffiti and consumption of alcohol in public places.

## Infobox 2: Local authority roles in response to gangs\*

Response type	Regulation	Programmes	Co-operation	Leadership	Facilitation
<p><i>Prevention</i> Aims to deter people from joining gangs, eliminate crime and develop safe and pro-social environments. Primary prevention focuses on the whole community; secondary prevention focuses on children and young people at high risk of joining gangs.</p>	<p>Developing district plans and by-laws to regulate impacts of activities and behaviors for the public good. They provide opportunities to signal and manage antisocial behaviour. District plans and by-laws may be used to address issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alcohol use in public places</li> <li>• fortifications and buildings that intimidate or are inappropriate</li> <li>• activities</li> <li>• noise.</li> </ul>	<p>Developing and delivering programmes and services within the scope of the Local Government Act 2002 that strengthen communities and their social and economic viability. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• place-based programmes such as urban regeneration initiatives, neighbourhood support</li> <li>• programmes providing alternative pathways, activities and events for groups vulnerable to gang recruitment and prospecting.</li> </ul>	<p>Support other agencies that are actively strengthening communities and providing pro-social alternatives to gang involvement, building skills and providing legitimate employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Political, community and organisational leadership that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• articulates values in relation to pro-social behaviour</li> <li>• promotes inter-agency co-operation</li> <li>• supports and promotes skills within councils that allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- effective policy, planning and regulatory provision</li> <li>- investment in and evaluation of initiatives and programmes in relation to prevention and intervention processes and relationship management with gangs and associates that encourage pro-social behaviours</li> <li>- effective enforcement of council rules, regulations, by-laws and statutory responsibilities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• optimises responses to emerging gang-related issues and ensuring an appropriate balance between prevention, intervention and enforcement.</li> </ul>	<p>Councils establish operational mechanisms to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage co-operation between interested agencies</li> <li>• provide support for sharing and leveraging resources from multiple sources</li> <li>• assist agencies and communities to scope and evaluate response options.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Intervention</i> Targets gang-involved individuals and those on the fringes of gangs, providing opportunities for alternative life paths.</p>	<p>Enforcing compliance with regulations, by-laws, District Plan rules and statutory requirements provided under a variety of acts. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource Management Act 1991</li> <li>• Building Act 2004</li> <li>• Health Act 1956</li> <li>• Dog Control Act 1996</li> <li>• Sale of Liquor Act 1989.</li> </ul>	<p>Developing programmes specifically targeted to engage gang members and associates in pro-social activities and to provide alternative pathways for gang members, associates and members of gang families.</p>	<p>Support other agencies actively targeting gangs and associates to generate pro-social behaviour, exit from gangs and re-entering pro-social communities.</p>	<p>Support police and other agencies such as Child, Youth and Family, New Zealand Customs, the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Housing New Zealand Corporation to actively pursue compliance among gang members and associates. Engage police and/or other agencies to support council staff in the enforcement of council rules, by-laws and statutory responsibilities.</p>	
<p><i>Enforcement</i> Focuses on law enforcement, deterrence and control. The goal is to reduce or eliminate criminal activity and remove gangs from the community.</p>	<p>Enforcing compliance with regulations, by-laws, District Plan rules and statutory requirements provided under a variety of acts. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource Management Act 1991</li> <li>• Building Act 2004</li> <li>• Health Act 1956</li> <li>• Dog Control Act 1996</li> <li>• Sale of Liquor Act 1989.</li> </ul>	<p>Developing programmes specifically targeted to engage gang members and associates in pro-social activities and to provide alternative pathways for gang members, associates and members of gang families.</p>	<p>Support police and other agencies such as Child, Youth and Family, New Zealand Customs, the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Housing New Zealand Corporation to actively pursue compliance among gang members and associates. Engage police and/or other agencies to support council staff in the enforcement of council rules, by-laws and statutory responsibilities.</p>	<p>Support police and other agencies such as Child, Youth and Family, New Zealand Customs, the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Education and Housing New Zealand Corporation to actively pursue compliance among gang members and associates. Engage police and/or other agencies to support council staff in the enforcement of council rules, by-laws and statutory responsibilities.</p>	

\* Note that an empty cell in the table does not mean that a council carries out no action under that heading.

Kawerau District Council uses its enforcement powers as required to deal with regulatory breaches by gangs or individual gang members. The council works closely with the police to manage any risks or dangers that arise in dealing with gang members. Because Kawerau is a small, close-knit community, there is some informal communication between council leaders and gang leaders. This can facilitate early, informal resolution of issues.

Timaru District Council also uses its enforcement powers to deal with any breaches of council rules and by-laws by gang members. Often, council officers are accompanied by police where it is known that gang members are involved.

Waipa District Council has a well-developed relationship with police. Council and police officers work together to deal with illegal building works, illegal bars, dog control problems, fire safety and other breaches of regulations or rules that involve gang members. When required, police accompany council officers in carrying out their duties. Six-monthly liaison meetings are held between the executive management and key officers of the council and police. There is also regular and frequent communication at the officer level between council officers and police.

## 6.2 TENANT MANAGEMENT

Palmerston North City Council actively manages tenants of its properties and deals with any tenants who have harassed others in their neighbourhoods. Tenants of the council's community housing include older people, people with mental or physical disabilities, those on low incomes, immigrants, refugees and overseas students.

## 6.3 FORTIFICATIONS BY-LAW

The Waipa District Plan sets out policies and rules concerning fortified sites to ensure that the safety of people and communities is not adversely affected by the development of fortified sites.<sup>39</sup> Erecting fortifications is a prohibited activity in the residential and general zones (or on a site that abuts or is

<sup>39</sup> Operative Waipa District Plan 1997. See Policies RU54A, RU54B, IN15, IN15A, CO24 and CO24A, and Rules 2.3.1.5, 3.3.1.5, 5.3.1.6, 6.3.1.4, 7.3.1.5 and 9.3.1.4.

across a road from a residential or general zone) and a non-complying activity in any other zone.

Fortified sites are described in the District Plan as sites having a look-out platform, tower or structure, or a wall, barricade, fence, electrified fence, barbed wire fence or similar structure that precludes or inhibits access by police or any authorised officer, or a monitoring system such as a surveillance camera.

The District Plan states that the adverse effects of such structures include a loss of privacy, loss of visual amenity and impacts on people's perception of their safety. Fortification also has the ability to affect property values and is at variance with the open characteristics of residential areas.

## 6.4 A LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE

The Wanganui District Council developed legislation to strengthen its powers to deal with gangs – the aforementioned Wanganui District Council (Prohibition of Gang Insignia) Act 2009.<sup>40</sup> By prohibiting the display of gang insignia in specified places in the district,<sup>41</sup> the Act provides a tool for the council and police to manage gang confrontations and intimidation of the public.

## 7. Councils addressing gang issues through programmes

*Try to make the focus on improving outcomes and providing alternatives for young people rather than 'taking on' the gangs. (Kawerau District Council)<sup>42</sup>*

The main preventative responses used by councils have focused on programmes and community development, such as:

- implementing youth development programmes, particularly for vulnerable young people to provide them with

<sup>40</sup> See <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/local/2009/0001/latest/whole.html> (viewed 23 Aug 2010) for the Act, which defines "gangs" in general and by name and defines "gang insignia".

<sup>41</sup> For the by-law, see <http://www.wanganui.govt.nz/Publications/policies/ProhibitionGangInsigniaBylaw2009.pdf> (viewed 23 Aug 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Comments from councils are taken from the LGNZ survey conducted as part of preparing these guidelines. See section 1.1.

- alternative life paths and deter them from joining gangs
- implementing community regeneration programmes
- promoting safety in public places.

Often these responses are combined.

## 7.1 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Napier City Council's primary approach to dealing with gangs is pursued within the framework of its broader policies related to strengthening communities and youth.

Napier's focus on youth has involved providing young people with alternatives to gang association, including exploring career choices, and supporting behavioural interventions and programmes with at-risk young people, such as the Ka Hao Te Rangatahi Programme – which is part of the Napier City Council's Crime Reduction Plan. The Napier City Council Policy for Young People specifically defines safety for young people as safety from peer pressure, alcohol and drugs, bullying, sexual abuse, physical abuse and gangs.

In Waitakere City, a number of positive programmes have been used to detach young people from gangs. Those have included:

- sponsoring and organising youth events including gang-free hip-hop gatherings
- establishing cadetships in council employment for young people that include young people from gang families
- providing community support for young people.

In Manukau City, youth programmes to reduce the attraction of gangs included:

- hosting drug-free and alcohol-free events
- providing free entry to swimming pools and youth sporting initiatives such as John Walker's Find Your Field of Dreams
- implementing community development programmes and appointing youth workers.

In Wanganui District, the Community Taskforce for Youth Wellbeing was established in 2007 to develop ways of stemming the flow of young people into gangs by providing them with opportunities to take alternative pathways.

The Taskforce includes a wide range of community stakeholders and government agencies, including council, iwi represent-

atives and senior representatives of government agencies and community youth representatives. The Taskforce developed For Our Kids, which focuses on three primary outcomes:

- young people feeling valued, having a sense of belonging and achieving positively
- increased positive interaction between adults, parents, the community and young people
- greater empathy and support for our kids.

Wanganui's family-friendly strategies include creating a safe community by taking a zero-tolerance approach to gangs.

Kawerau District's main responses to gang-related issues are concerned with creating a supportive community environment for children and young people by providing positive alternatives to seeking to join a gang. Agencies also work one-on-one with at-risk young people and their families / whanau.

## 7.2 COMMUNITY REGENERATION PROGRAMMES

Napier City Council's response, to strengthen communities, has been concerned with revitalising communities, the amenities in those communities (such as shopping centres and marae) and providing safe public spaces.

For example, the Maraenui Urban Renewal Plan involves:

- establishing a safe, secure, functional shopping centre and surroundings, which includes lighting upgrades and redevelopment of shops
- supporting housing upgrades
- supporting the local renewal trust
- establishing a health care centre
- developing a Community Safety Plan
- establishing a one-stop agency shop.

In Hamilton, activities focusing on community renewal and support in Enderley included establishing the Enderley Community Centre by the council. The Centre runs a youth programme, play groups, night classes and events. A medical centre is located at the centre and agencies use space there. The Enderley Park Community Centre Committee Inc (EPCCCI) also runs a breakfast club, out-of-school programmes for children between the ages of 5 and 14, and computer classes.

Other initiatives have included:

- locating the council youth and neighbourhood advisors at the Enderley Park Community Centre
- locating a community constable at the Community Centre
- establishing a sports trust with a focus on youth sports
- council funds being contributed towards a basketball court, with further fundraising being led by local community development workers and the community constable (with support from the community)
- council and the community police supporting Housing New Zealand Corporation community renewal with the establishment of a residents' group, and upgrading housing, fences and landscaping
- running community working bees to clean up vandalism and tagging, with much of the paint and materials supplied by the council.
- launching a Computer Clubhouse, which provides a creative and safe after-school learning environment.

Another example of community regeneration is provided by Safer Communities Marlborough, which ran a nine-day project in 2008.<sup>43</sup> This project applied CPTED design principles in a residential area with the aim of reducing crime. The project involved the council working with residents, landlords, police and local organisations.

A wide range of activities were undertaken as part of the project, including:

- removal of old car bodies
- removal of rubbish
- cleaning up of residential properties (residents provided the labour, council provided machinery and some help)
- repairs of footpaths and roads
- repairs of residents' window glass
- painting murals
- more active animal control
- establishment of a neighbourhood support group
- children's story time sessions
- youth activities trip
- neighbourhood barbeque
- home visits by agencies to provide information and advice about a wide range of matters

- follow-up events, such as handing out seedlings for residents to start gardens.

Evaluation of the project was undertaken with agencies and residents.

### 7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY PROGRAMMES

Waitakere City wanted to reduce the attraction of gangs to young people and was a member of the Auckland Youth Support Network. Its crime prevention plan was specifically focused on reducing graffiti vandalism, public violence and family violence. All these can be associated with young people turning to crime.

Waitakere was also concerned with addressing issues involving youth and substance abuse. Community Action on Youth and Drugs recognises that gangs actively prospect young people involved in drug consumption for gang membership. In addition, an array of community-based patrols and relationships with local ethnic councils, as well as place-based regeneration (such as that undertaken in Massey), were directed at ensuring both improved community surveillance and improved community engagement.

Crime prevention plan programmes in Palmerston North City have included:

#### *Projects to reduce youth offending:*

- advertising in the cinema for 12 months
- supplying free graffiti removal kits
- setting up the Manawatu Youth Driving programme, which targets repeat youth offenders. With 101 participants completing the course, the re-offending rate has so far been low at 6.9 per cent.<sup>44</sup>
- setting up the Rock On truancy programme
- establishing a Junior Neighbourhood Support programme
- setting up the Blue Light Trust
- setting up a project for youth offenders to remove graffiti.

#### *Projects to reduce family violence:*

- advertising in the cinema for 12 months
- distributing an anti family-violence booklet that provides legislative information
- placing the Its Not OK campaign image on the back of buses for 12 months
- allocating \$5,000 (a grant) to Manawatu Abuse Intervention Network to run targeted projects by the 40 member Community Board

<sup>43</sup> Marlborough District was not one of the case studies. For further information, see Johnson, D. 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Palmerston North City Council. 2009.

- allocating \$18,500 (a grant) to Te Manawa Services to run a “wrap around” programme aimed at reducing family violence through education and support.

*Projects to reduce burglaries:*

- advertising in the cinema for 12 months
- dropping a burglary pamphlet in recently burgled areas
- installing Lock It Or Lose It signs in areas at high risk of vehicle theft
- providing information on how to help prevent burglary.

*Projects to reduce alcohol harm:*

- advertising in the cinema for 12 months
- developing a strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm in Palmerston North
- setting up citizen’s band radio communication between licensed premises in the central business district. Twenty licensed premises can directly communicate to give warning on people evicted for violence, abusive behaviour and being underage.

The Hastings District Council, which was not a case-study council, has drawn up the Crime Prevention Plan 2007,<sup>45</sup> which specifically addresses gang issues.

Goal 2 (Gang-Based Offending) has two objectives:

- to increase knowledge of the ways to fight gang-based offending in Hastings District
- to identify strategies to address gang-based offending in Hastings District.

In addition, Goal 3 of the Plan relates to youth offending and re-offending, and seeks to minimise the number of youths who are first time offenders and re-offenders. Strategies include addressing under-age drinking, supporting truancy services, dealing with tagging and graffiti, and increasing opportunities for positive parenting and for supervised youth recreation.

Another council that was not involved in the case studies also developed a specific plan: the North Shore City Crime Prevention Plan. It included actions to address identified gang issues, such as:

- developing a co-ordinated strategy to stop the emergence of youth gangs
- training and supporting those working with

youth at high risk of offending

- developing co-ordinated strategies to identify high-risk areas through inter-agency collaboration
- raising awareness among young people of the negative impacts of being involved in gangs
- setting up a safe and easy process for young people to inform the appropriate agency of gang emergence or incidence
- supporting young people’s programmes and activities.

## 8. Councils addressing gang issues through leadership

In several of the council areas, a high level of public concern has emerged about specific gang issues. Public concern is often triggered by an event, such as inter-gang fighting, prospecting, the appearance of gang fortifications or the emergence of youth violence.

All the case-study councils demonstrated leadership in addressing gang issues. Mayors and councillors have played pivotal roles in setting out a clear vision and direction, leading projects, encouraging other organisations to become involved, and generating community support for actions.

Leadership within the council is also important, to ensure that there is a clearly articulated vision and a response, and that the latter is consistently followed across council departments.

Kawerau District Council is actively involved in leading youth development and community development initiatives. Kawerau is one of three Bay of Plenty communities selected to pilot the Young People and Gangs Toolkit developed by the Ministry of Social Development. The council is chairing the local project group called Amazing Kidz in Kawerau (AKiK), which has prepared an action plan based on the toolkit.

Gang prospecting of local youth was the catalyst for the Timaru District Council to develop initiatives to support vulnerable youth. The prospecting had come to the notice of the council through its Safer Communities youth workers. The mayor wrote to key organisations in the community, inviting them to discuss how to address the issue. As a result, Project Y was formed.

<sup>45</sup> To view the Plan, see <http://www.hastingsdc.govt.nz/files/all/community/safety/crime-prevention-plan.pdf> (viewed 20 Oct 2010).

It is chaired by the mayor and involves police, the Probation Service, Housing New Zealand Corporation, Work and Income, local iwi and whanau services, local Maori leaders, school principals and local organisations that run community patrols.

Project Y has developed a number of initiatives to engage the community including:

- working with schools
- meeting with at-risk youth and their parents, and monitoring their progress
- working with local media to lower the profile of gangs and gang activities, to reduce the “glamour” factor of gangs
- setting up a public text number that people can use to provide information about gangs. Texting was chosen as a way of making the line accessible to young people and the text number is widely publicised, including daily through the local newspaper.

There has been a high level of community support for Timaru District Council to address gang issues. A public meeting in 2007 with the theme “making a stand on gangs” attracted 400 people. A wide range of suggested actions emerged out of the meeting, and many of those have been followed through by the council.

The Wanganui District Council sought the views of the community about the introduction of legislation prohibiting the wearing of gang insignia in public places through the council’s Referendum ’07.<sup>46</sup> The question asked was “Should Wanganui introduce a local bill that outlaws the wearing of gang insignia in public places?” Approximately 50 per cent of eligible residents participated in the referendum and of those, 64 per cent voted in favour of progressing the Bill. The Wanganui District Council (Prohibition of Gang Insignia) Act 2009 is a direct response to community concerns about gang intimidation.

Publicly expressed concerns about gang issues also came through the LTCCP public consultation processes. As well, a local Youth Council commissioned a poll of 2000 young people and respondents nominated “the interference of gangs” as one of their two

top issues – and this was before major gang confrontations of 2006.<sup>47</sup>

Further support for the Act was evident from the New Zealand Police Association and local police. Police Headquarters were significant contributors to the drafting of the Bill.

## 9. Councils addressing gang issues through facilitation

Councils have key facilitation and co-ordination roles, both to ensure that actions are co-ordinated across council departments, as well as encouraging co-ordinated responses in the community. Through facilitation and co-ordination, councils often lead or jointly lead initiatives, as the examples below show.

Kawerau District’s inter-agency K-oper8 group is chaired by the mayor. K-oper8 was established in 2006 following the identification of a need for government agencies to improve the way they work together and with the community. The group co-ordinates and networks a wide range of government agencies with community stakeholders to make services more accessible to residents. K-oper8 particularly focuses on helping children, young people and families / whanau.

It has initiated a number of projects aimed at making Kawerau a safer place and building community spirit, including:

- running an expo day to promote social services
- supporting one-stop health information service
- helping with the Community Food Bank drive
- supporting the establishment of the Kawerau Youth Council
- recognising individual and group contributions to the community through Mayoral Awards.

In late 2007, Hamilton City Council called together a wide range of government agencies and local organisations to develop the Social Wellbeing Strategy, which included eight flagship projects.

<sup>46</sup> See <http://www.wanganuireferendum.govt.nz/07/projects/2.asp> (viewed 29 Oct 2010). Referenda are posted to all individuals on the electoral roll. In the last 5 years, the council has run seven referenda on major local issues.

<sup>47</sup> See media release: Mayor says legal advice OKs gang by-law - 6/4/2006. Available at: <http://www.wanganui.govt.nz/news/showNews.asp?id=507> (viewed 12 Aug 2010).

The Improving Outcomes for Youth At-Risk Hamilton Action Plan was one of these. The Improving Outcomes Project Group that developed the action plan includes the council, various government agencies, the District Health Board, the primary health organisation, the polytechnic and youth organisations. The council's role was critical for co-ordinating meetings and information-sharing amongst organisations.

The Improving Outcomes Project Group was overseen by the Social Wellbeing Leadership Forum, comprising CEO's and directors from relevant government and community agencies, and chaired by Hamilton's mayor. This forum greatly assisted with generating the commitment of agencies to contribute to the development of the action plan and carry out key actions.

## 10. Councils addressing gang issues through co-operation

Of the 54 councils that responded to the survey, almost three-quarters identified organisations they work with to address gang issues.

It was most common for councils to work with central government agencies (identified by 57 per cent of councils), followed by community groups/non-government organisations (32 per cent of councils), district health boards (28 per cent) and iwi or Maori organisations (26 per cent). Few councils worked with other local authorities or local businesses to address gang issues.

With regard to central government agencies, it was most common for councils to work with the Ministry of Social Development (11 councils), Ministry of Justice (nine councils) and police (eight councils). Other central government agencies that councils worked with included the Ministry of Youth Development; Child, Youth and Family; Department of Internal Affairs; Accident Compensation Corporation; Housing New Zealand Corporation; the Fire Service; Te Puni Kokiri; and Ministry of Education. Other organisations mentioned included schools, tertiary education institutions and churches.

Most councils have very little formal communication with gangs, leaving that to police, who often initiate contact with

gangs. A few of the case-study councils have had formal meetings with gangs or have undertaken informal liaison with gang leaders.

Eight of the surveyed councils identified some sort of liaison or involvement with gang members. This included providing training opportunities or work experience for offenders (including gang members) and attending meetings with gangs organised by other agencies such as police.

Although most councils work with others to address gang issues, one half did not identify any organisational arrangements to oversee gang-related work. However, three councils reported that they were involved in an inter-agency group established to deal with gang issues and one third of councils reported they are part of a "multi-topic" inter-agency group that deals with gang issues as part of its work.

One council is involved in an inter-agency group specifically to deal with gang issues, as well as a more general inter-agency group.

All case-study councils have been involved in inter-agency collaboration concerning gang issues and have shared information with other organisations to increase knowledge about gangs.

It is notable that some of the case-study councils are engaged with a very wide range of government agencies and community organisations. In particular, most of the case-study councils have developed close relationships with police, including regular meetings as well as informal contact.

In Napier, there is regular and frequent communication at the officer level between council officers and police. Police have established an office in Maraenui as part of the broader redevelopment of the Maraenui shopping centre as a safe and active hub of the community. Underpinning Napier City Council's approach has been the development of inter-agency partnerships to ensure:

- a co-ordinated approach to funding and cross-sectoral programmes
- shared understanding of critical issues for young people and local communities, including gang impacts
- agreed understanding of individual agencies' responsibilities and functions in relation to gangs.

Waitakere City Council worked in close collaboration with police and, in youth development, with other central government agencies. There was a strong culture of communication between police and the council officers.

Manukau City Council actively advocated for resources for police that allowed them to effectively address and suppress criminal activities and organised crime associated with gangs.

Palmerston North City Council has a strategic partnership agreement with the Ministry of Justice. This agreement includes a crime prevention plan and monitoring of the plan's activities and outcomes.

Initiatives under the plan directly relate to four identified areas: youth offending, family violence, burglary and alcohol-related crimes (see section 7.3).

To maintain community relations and oversee the crime prevention plan, a Safety Advisory Board (SAB) was established.<sup>48</sup> It involves about 20 organisations, with those involved in 2008 including Palmerston North City Council; Rangitane; the education sector; Child Youth and Family; Massey University; police; the Safe City Trust; a Community Safety coordinator; Mid Central Health; Linton Army Camp; Ministry of Justice; St John New Zealand; Ministry of Social Development; Fire Service; Accident Compensation Corporation; Ohakea Airforce Base; and Housing New Zealand Corporation.

The primary role of the SAB is to provide governance support for each of the community safety priorities outlined in the plan. The board also works to enhance co-ordination and reduce duplication in the community safety activities of the participating organisations. The council's strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Justice and the SAB have been key in addressing gang issues.

The council considers that a key factor in the community's success in dealing with gangs has been building co-operation, communication and trust between organisations through the SAB. The SAB has

facilitated networking and information-sharing amongst organisations, and one-to-one communication between organisations.

## 10.1 CO-OPERATING ON MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

The Hamilton City Council, police and the Ministry of Social Development have developed a joint communication strategy that clearly identifies spokespeople and keeps all parties informed about youth gang-related behaviour.

All public communications relating to youth gangs (excepting emergency responses) are developed jointly and signed off by representatives of the three agencies.

The strategy is used when any of the agencies are approached by the media, or the three agencies agree to proactively release information to the media. The joint communication strategy aims to:

- ensure co-ordination and consistency of messages across agencies, and a co-ordinated response to media enquiries
- raise awareness about the Improving Outcomes project group and Action Plan, and the positive outcomes that are being sought for young people and the community
- create awareness of best-practice solutions for addressing youth gang-related issues
- correct misinformation about what makes up a youth gang and youth gang activity

### *Why and how to involve the media?*

Howell and Curry, communication specialists, advocate for involving a variety of media in responses to gang issues, as a strategy to avoid media competition, exaggeration or neglect of gang issues.\* They suggest that three things are important when engaging the media:

- ensuring that the media understand the nature and scope of gang issues
- involving reporters interested in covering positive community events
- managing the publication of gang names and other information that may give gangs publicity and enhance their notoriety, as this could aid recruitment.

<sup>48</sup> See <http://www.palmerstonnorth.com/YourCouncil/CouncilActivities/CouncilInitiatives/Detail.aspx?id=22883> (viewed 12 Aug 2010).

\* Howell, J. and Curry, G. 2009.

- minimise the sensationalising and legitimising of youth gang activity through media reporting
- promote local success stories that show young people are valued members of and contribute to the community.

The joint communication strategy includes communications principles, key messages and identifies audiences for which the information is to be available.

## 11. Conditions for success

The case studies, survey and literature review showed key conditions for the successful development and implementation of effective responses to gang issues.

These conditions for success are:

- knowing what the issues are
- targeting behaviour rather than affiliation
- setting clear goals, objectives and priorities
- using multiple responses
- co-ordinating actions
- practising leadership and engaging the community
- providing adequate resourcing.

### 11.1 KNOWING WHAT THE ISSUES ARE

*... an effective strategy must be rooted in a preceding problem analysis that takes the time and the care to define the various components of the situation ... the consequences of failing to engage in this step may be great. A misinformed strategy may possess ineffective tactics, making it impotent, or worse, leading to a further decline of the situation. (McGloin 2005: 8)*

*Clearly define the problem; it may be a perception that is not a reality. (Central Hawke's Bay District Council)*

*Better liaison and definition of local problems. (Upper Hutt City Council)*

*Identify issues early and address. (Marlborough District Council)*

Research shows that success in dealing with harmful gang behaviour starts with identifying and analysing local gang issues. Establishing an accurate evidence base is crucial to identifying priorities for action and developing solutions that will work in the community. An inadequate problem definition may lead to confusion about what are the most significant

and pressing issues, and a lack of clarity about what needs to be achieved. This in turn can lead to a narrow choice of responses, as well as responses that inadequately address the issues. Local responses must take into account local situations, local issues, the capacity of local residents and organisations to respond and local preferences. A response that may be supported in one community may be inappropriate and un-workable for another.

#### *Finding out about gang issues*

The North Shore City Crime Prevention Plan identified a key issue as the "perceived increase in gangs presence and gang-related activity and recruitment on the Shore". Actions identified to address the issue included:

- drawing up a clear definition and agreement on what a youth gang is and the meaning of "at risk"
- making, or having, available statistics and research on youth crime and youth gangs on the North Shore.

Projects listed in the Plan that increase knowledge and understanding of local gang issues include:

- researching and developing best-practice models of working with at-risk youth
- establishing a shared database of known areas of gang-related incidents.

A systematic assessment of the type, depth and scope of local gang situations, issues and trends is needed. Part of this task will involve compiling baseline information that provides a snapshot of the existing situation.

Key questions to help the collection of this information are:

- What are the nature and causes of problems? Addressing this question could involve identifying the factors in families, neighbourhoods, schools and community environments that play a part in generating and sustaining gang problems.<sup>49</sup>
- What are the harmful behaviours that local gangs engage in? It is important to focus on specific activities identified through local experience or awareness.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> p. 8, Institute for Intergovernmental Research. 2009.

<sup>50</sup> p. 15, Bureau of Justice Assistance. 1999.

- What specific harms do these behaviours cause?
- Who carries out these harmful behaviours?
- Which parts of the community are affected by these harmful behaviours and where do they occur?
- How is the wider community affected?

*An example of information gathering and use*

In 2007, Hamilton City Council commissioned research to collect information about Hamilton youth gangs, to identify gaps in services for Hamilton youth and to develop recommendations that target youth gang criminality.

The research found the following.

- The areas with high youth gang activity in Hamilton experience relative deprivation compared to other areas within the city.
- There are groups of young people in the city that the community define as “gangs”. However, these groups are diverse and constantly changing, and have been part of the community for a long time.
- There are few services for young people who are already engaging in risk-taking behaviour including being in a youth gang. They and their whanau tend not to access services, making them a “hard to reach” population.

This research was used to develop the Improving Outcomes for Youth At-Risk Hamilton Action Plan.

The sorts of data that will be useful in compiling comprehensive in-depth knowledge and accurate baseline information about local gang situations, issues and trends will include:<sup>51</sup>

- local demographic data
- police law enforcement data
- school data on attendance and at-risk youth

- data from local social services relating to contact with gang members and gang behaviours
- relevant council data relating to contact with gang members and gang behaviours
- information on community perceptions and views about public safety, gangs and the effectiveness of different responses
- information from assessments of the local availability of services and of service gaps.

On-going gathering of information is important as the dynamics around gangs are constantly shifting, as are local community factors, demographics and economic conditions.

The implementation of specific responses (prevention, intervention, enforcement) may also affect gangs and change the nature of the issues in the community. On-going assessment of changing situations helps in designing responses that are adaptable and flexible.

## 11.2 TARGETING BEHAVIOUR RATHER THAN AFFILIATION

Focusing on behaviour that causes harm, rather than on gang membership per se, has been identified by several studies as critical to implementing successful responses to gang issues.<sup>52</sup> Those responses are targeted at reducing or eliminating harmful behaviours that impact on public safety.

There are several reasons why targeting behaviour, not affiliation, makes sense.

- Councils cannot eradicate gangs. Membership of gangs has been strongly associated with multiple problems experienced by individuals, families and communities.<sup>53</sup>
- Gangs are fluid and their membership changes. Targeting particular gang members at any one time will not eliminate negative gang impacts.
- Not all gang behaviour is criminal or harmful to public safety.
- There are good reasons for targeting responses to non-gang members, those in the fringes of gang activity or those at risk of being drawn into gangs. Such responses reduce the ability of gangs to reproduce

<sup>51</sup> p. 8, Institute for Intergovernmental Research. 2009.

<sup>52</sup> Greene, J. and Pranis, K. 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Greene, J and Pranis, K. 2007.

themselves and maintain an influence in the community.

### 11.3 SETTING CLEAR GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Once gang-related issues are identified and defined, goals and objectives need to be set. These goals and objectives must clearly link to and align with an assessment of the issues and must identify priority areas and target groups for action. Infobox 3 (below) provides three examples from the case-study councils of this process.

Communities and organisations involved in addressing gang-related issues will need to discuss and agree on which issues are to be tackled first, in order to effectively deal with the most pressing harmful behaviours. One approach is to focus on the most serious issues first, while working on other important issues needing longer-term solutions. This approach uses four categories, with the highest priority for action being category 1.<sup>54</sup>

*Category 1: Serious threats to the physical safety of community members should receive top priority and warrant immediate action. Prevention and intervention efforts will be compromised as long as these problems continue unabated.*

*Category 2: Problems that are perceived as threats to the safety of community members should receive medium priority and warrant a response that reassures community members that their needs are being listened to and addressed.*

*Category 3: Problems that are long term and systemic in nature, and that deal with large, underlying social conditions in the targeted community, should be addressed with long-term strategies that will resolve these issues without creating new problems. These problems play a significant and contributing role in local gang issues but are not immediately life-threatening.*

*Category 4: Problems that pose a serious obstacle to an effective response to local gangs should be addressed with strategies that change the policies and procedures of local agencies so they are more successful in responding to gangs.*

Communities may feel overwhelmed with the number of issues and priorities. A constructive approach is to identify small, manageable issues, such as tackling graffiti in a particular location.<sup>55</sup> This helps in setting, and achieving, specific objectives and building actions into comprehensive responses.

<sup>54</sup> p. 12, Institute for Intergovernmental Research. 2009.

<sup>55</sup> p. xi, Bureau of Justice Assistance. 1999.

### Infobox 3: Examples of goal and objective setting by case-study councils

	Description	Example
Goals	Set out the end points	"Palmerston North – the safest city in New Zealand" (Crime Prevention Plan).
Objectives	Describe broadly how to get to the goals	"Wanganui is a safe place, free from gangs" (Key objective for Community Outcome, A Safe Community. Ten Year Plan 2009–2019).
Actions	Describe exactly what needs to happen to achieve the goals. Set out the "who, what, when, where, and how". Actions consist of the appropriate mix of preventative, intervention and enforcement activities.	"Develop and implement a wrap-around integrated service that will support the top 10 young people and their families at risk of or involved in youth gang activity" (Action 1, Improving Outcomes for Youth At-Risk Hamilton Action Plan).

## 11.4 USING MULTIPLE RESPONSES

*Resolving issues with respect to gang activity must involve changes in attitudes, societal norms, relationships, organizational cultures, policies, civic action and laws. As such, the processes and practices involved in developing a comprehensive community approach to the issue of gangs are broad in scope and move beyond the patchwork provision of programs and services. The community approach seeks systemic change that creates linkages between systems, and redefines ways of working together to develop a collaborative, integrated approach to gangs. It is a way to create joined-up solutions to joined-up problems. (Erickson et al. 2007: 3)*

*Take it slowly! Multi-agency and multi-pronged, long-term approach. (Hastings District Council)*

As mentioned several times already, the most effective responses to harmful gang-related behaviours involve a multi-faceted, multi-partner and comprehensive strategy that uses prevention, intervention and enforcement.<sup>56</sup>

These strategies typically involve:

- mobilising the community to support and engage with the responses
- active enforcement to reduce harmful behaviours
- using preventative community development approaches
- targeting and addressing social problems through specific interventions
- providing pro-social alternatives to gang lifestyles for youth
- focusing on dealing with gang-related harmful behaviours within a holistic approach that works on solutions across the local economy, education, health, housing, community regeneration, employment, and training and supporting families
- focusing on changing “no go” areas into attractive and cohesive neighbourhoods<sup>57</sup>
- using a mix of short-term and long-term approaches that acknowledge there are no quick fixes or easy solutions.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Huff, C. 2002; Brand, A. and Ollerearnshaw, R. 2008; p. 37, Ministry of Social Development. 2008.

<sup>57</sup> p. 35, Brand, A. and Ollerearnshaw, R. 2008.

<sup>58</sup> Wyrick, P. and Howell, J. 2004.

## 11.5 CO-ORDINATING ACTIONS

*The most effective approaches to addressing gang-related problems involve several agencies or groups handling a number of facets of local gang problems ... (Bureau of Justice Assistance 1997: x)*

The literature on effective responses to gang issues emphasises that no single agency can expect to solve the associated problems by itself. Co-ordination when addressing gang-related harmful behaviours is needed and is especially important when addressing youth issues as young people are particularly at risk when they fall between services or are transferring between one service and another.

Co-ordination requires:

- a clear understanding of what a collective and co-ordinated approach entails, including respective roles and responsibilities of participating organisations
- relationship-building among key agencies
- information-sharing
- shared risk assessment
- linking the policies and interventions of different agencies
- a management group made up of representatives of the participating agencies.

Councils offered good advice for working with police:

*Maintain an excellent relationship with your local Police including the Area Commander and Iwi Liaison Officer. (Invercargill City Council)*

*An active and effective working relationship with the Police – across all areas of Council – from strategy/policy through to operational areas such as rates and compliance. (Kapiti Coast District Council)*

## 11.6 PRACTISING LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The literature on effective responses to gang issues emphasises the need for “catalytic leaders” such as a mayor and councillors who can focus attention on the issues, engage people, stimulate ideas for action and sustain momentum.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> p. 7, Erickson, K. et al. 2007.

Surveyed councils said:

*Engage with the communities, face to face (kanohi ki te kanohi), advocate a collaborative approach to community concerns.* (Hauraki District Council)

*Work closely with specific communities – get their buy in and work with them.* (Hamilton City Council)

There is evidence that councils that are able to mobilise community leadership through their own leadership efforts are implementing one of the most effective ways of addressing gang issues. Mobilising involves strengthening the capacity of the community to deal with gangs, by providing and sharing resources and support.

Essential elements of successful community mobilisation include:<sup>60</sup>

- recognition of gang issues as a major threat to community safety
- identification of key neighbourhood leaders in the community
- good communication, keeping everyone informed
- discussion of the issues and concerns with community representatives and residents (including young people) to seek their support and to refine priorities.

Specific actions undertaken by some of the case-study councils to engage their communities include:

- personal approaches by councillors and/or officers to community organisations and businesses, asking them to identify issues and seek their involvement in solutions
- public meetings and neighbourhood meetings to identify issues and solutions
- provision of factual information by councils about gang behaviours and impacts
- engagement of local media to convey factual information and manage publicity about gangs
- engagement of schools to support alternative options to gang lifestyles.

Moving at the pace set by the community is also important in generating community leadership on gang issues.<sup>61</sup>

## 11.7 PROVIDING ADEQUATE RESOURCING

Adequate and sustained resourcing, both in terms of people and money, is necessary for developing and delivering effective responses to gang issues. The establishment of new interventions, or the continuation of successful existing interventions, will require consideration of how funding will be sustained.

Investment in people capacity will need to be considered. This includes skills training and support, and the development of social infrastructure and networks. Ensuring the sustainability of volunteers and community organisations is crucial to success.

Another consideration is how to effectively target resources to the areas and issues most needing them. Getting the most out of existing resources may require agencies to jointly commission and fund responses.

## 12. How to monitor and evaluate policies and actions

Monitoring and evaluation are important for the following reasons.<sup>62</sup>

- Knowing how current initiatives are working helps to focus effort and resources for programme improvements, and for making decisions about future expenditure.
- Monitoring allows progress to be measured against timeframes, so that adjustments can be made where necessary.
- Monitoring and evaluation are necessary for documenting and reporting project successes.
- Documentation of implementation and delivery processes during monitoring and evaluating means that, if successful, the programme can be replicated elsewhere.
- Monitoring and evaluation information can be used to support grant applications.
- Information from monitoring and evaluation can be fed back to stakeholders, including funders.

Generally, two types of evaluations are done. One type of evaluation looks at the processes and procedures involved in the response's

<sup>60</sup> pp. 17–19, Howell, J. and Curry, G. 2009.

<sup>61</sup> Erickson, K. et al. 2007.

<sup>62</sup> p. 77, Institute for Intergovernmental Research. 2009.

design, development and delivery (often called a “process evaluation”). A process evaluation assesses whether the response has been implemented well and as intended.

The second type of evaluation focuses on outcomes and impacts, and is concerned with documenting the extent to which the response has been successful in achieving its objectives. Both types of evaluation are useful for understanding whether the response has addressed the issues of concern.

The decision whether to use “in house” or external personnel to evaluate efforts will be based on many factors, including available budget, timeframe, the need for an independent assessment and the types of expertise required.

The large majority of councils that responded to the survey (43 councils, or 80 per cent) stated that they did not monitor or evaluate the impacts of their activities on gang issues. Only seven councils specified that they did any monitoring or evaluation. One council acknowledged the need for longer-term evaluation of responses to assess the degree of success. A few councils noted information that they routinely used for monitoring and evaluating gang issues, such as:

- local crime data and other police data
- agency reports, including agency evaluations of initiatives
- information shared through inter-agency groups or networks
- council data on dog control and fortifications
- key performance indicators (KPIs) in service contracts with local service providers.

Data collection for monitoring and evaluation should be built into programme design. It is especially important to document the range of baseline information that will need to be collected during the problem identification stage.

As stated earlier, baseline information consists of information collected before any programme is implemented and it provides a comprehensive picture of the existing situation. It should include data about local crime and safety issues that the programme seeks to address. Baseline information will help in subsequent assessments of whether any changes have occurred as a result of the introduction of the programme.

Useful data that will assist in identifying whether interventions are effective should include:<sup>63</sup>

- police incident report data
- police intelligence data
- school attendance data
- data on vandalism and graffiti
- relevant council enforcement data (eg relating to noise disturbance, dog control)
- service or programme client data (eg number involved, target groups, pro-social outcomes achieved – such as engagement in education, training or employment)
- data on participation of key agencies, including types of services provided, hours of services provided, number of staff
- data from surveys of perceptions of organisations and residents on:
  - impacts of local gang issues
  - the effectiveness of responses.

## 12.1 WAYS OF COLLECTING INFORMATION

There are various ways of collecting information, including information held by organisations:

- holding meetings and group discussions (eg focus groups that include those directly affected; public meetings; neighbourhood meetings)
- holding one-to-one discussions/interviews (eg with service providers, funders, key stakeholders, affected residents)
- observing (eg a particular initiative or event)
- soliciting written responses (eg a resident survey; feedback through newspaper; website responses)
- searching documentation and records (eg agency files, quarterly or annual reports, correspondence, attendance records)
- searching statistical data and databases (eg police data; demographic data).

## 12.2 EXAMPLES OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

To evaluate the delivery of the programme or specific responses / activities, the following questions can be asked.

- How do activities contribute to attaining objectives?

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<sup>63</sup> p. 76, Institute for Intergovernmental Research. 2009.

- What are the strengths and weakness of the way the response has been delivered?
- What adjustments in processes might lead to a better attainment of objectives?
- What hasn't been done that should have been done?
- How could the response be improved?
- What components of delivery are key to success?
- How have attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the realities of gangs in the locality changed?

Similarly, information for evaluating relationships can be solicited by asking:

- How have relationships between stakeholders worked?
- How effective are communication and information sharing among stakeholders?

Lastly, information about the effectiveness of a response, programme or activities can be obtained by asking:

- Have the issues identified been reduced or eliminated?
- Are fewer residents adversely affected?
- Is there reduced frequency of the problem?
- What are the levels and types of effects that can be attributed to the response / programme / activity?
- What are the barriers to effectiveness?
- What unintended effects are there?
- What changes in policy and practice have occurred that may result in positive changes for young people at risk of recruitment into gang lifestyles?

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**Local Government  
New Zealand**  
*te pūtahi matakōkiri*



114–118 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6011,  
PO Box 1214, Wellington 6140, New Zealand  
**Phone:** 64 4 924 1200 **Fax:** 64 4 924 1230

**[www.lgnz.co.nz](http://www.lgnz.co.nz)**