

Greater Manchester Police, Fire, and Crime Panel

Date: 8 June 2022

Subject: Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit Annual Update and Forward Look

Report of: Baroness Beverley Hughes, Deputy Mayor for Police, Crime, Criminal Justice services and Fire and Caroline Simpson, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Police and Crime.

Purpose of Report

- To update the Panel on the recent developments with the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Programme, including the work of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to implement the priorities in the Greater Manchester Serious Violence Action Plan
- Summarise the key achievements of the GM VRU in 2021/22, particularly in respect of the funding received from the Home Office for the VRU programme including Police 'GRIP' funding.
- To update the Panel on the future opportunities presented by the Government's recent announcement regarding the 3-year serious violence funding envelope that will be available to Greater Manchester, subject to successful application.

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to:

1. Note the update contained within this report.
2. Contact the named officers if further information about the programme is required

Contact Officers

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1. Introduction/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Formed in the summer of 2019, the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit is now a fully established multi-agency team which functions across a broad interdisciplinary programme of work, and since the removal of pandemic related social restrictions, the team has been able to experience the full benefits of colocation at GMCA Headquarters.
- 1.2 Whilst the task of violence reduction across the city-region has been met with a number of complex challenges, as it has faced the realities of a global pandemic, it is hoped that this report will demonstrate, that encouraging progress has been made and that Panel Members will feel reassured by the detail set out in this overview.
- 1.3 As with any multi-agency partnership, it is essential to invest in and build strong and productive relationships and whilst the VRU has evolved into a stable and vibrant team, it has been vital to connect and influence the wider partnership in the same manner. Therefore, the VRU has worked hard to establish and maintain a network of practice through a number of channels and opportunities. Successive events at the start of 2022 which culminated in the loss of four young people to knife related violence only serve as a powerful reminder of the significant task that lies ahead, underscoring the need to work together more effectively and purposefully in partnership.
- 1.4 As often stated, the global pandemic was an unforeseen development which severely impacted public service delivery, but it also forced people to work differently and the VRU was able to extend its reach quite effectively across GM by the use of online technology. Even at the height of lockdown, in addition to the routine strategic and operational governance meetings the VRU established a series of learning and development events which were attended by a breadth of GM organisations and agencies. It is upon this initial investment of communication and engagement that the programme was able to build and is now performing an essential role alongside both statutory bodies and community groups.
- 1.5 For a more fulsome overview of the violence reduction programme, the VRU recently published its 2021/2022 annual report which provides a detailed summary of the

resources and interventions implemented to help prevent and reduce the impact of serious violence in our city-region at a regional, local, and place-based level.

- 1.6 One of the VRU's flagship interventions is the Community-led Programme which has gone from strength to strength in the last year, and the VRU is very proud of the work that has been developed with Bolton CVS, 10GM and our voluntary sector partners across the city-region. The grassroots alliances that have been developed particularly in Manchester, Salford and Bolton have reached thousands of residents, including many children and young people deemed to be at risk of being affected by violence.
- 1.7 The Government has announced that Greater Manchester will be eligible (following successful application) to receive a multi-year financial settlement, which means that over the next three years the VRU will receive £5,863,803 in 2022/23, £4,388,080 in 2023/24, and £4,341,877 in 2024/25. There is a requirement for a level of match-funding built into the three-year period and we are expected to commit at least 20% of our budget to interventions with a 'high impact' rating as defined by the [Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit](#).

2. The VRU's approach

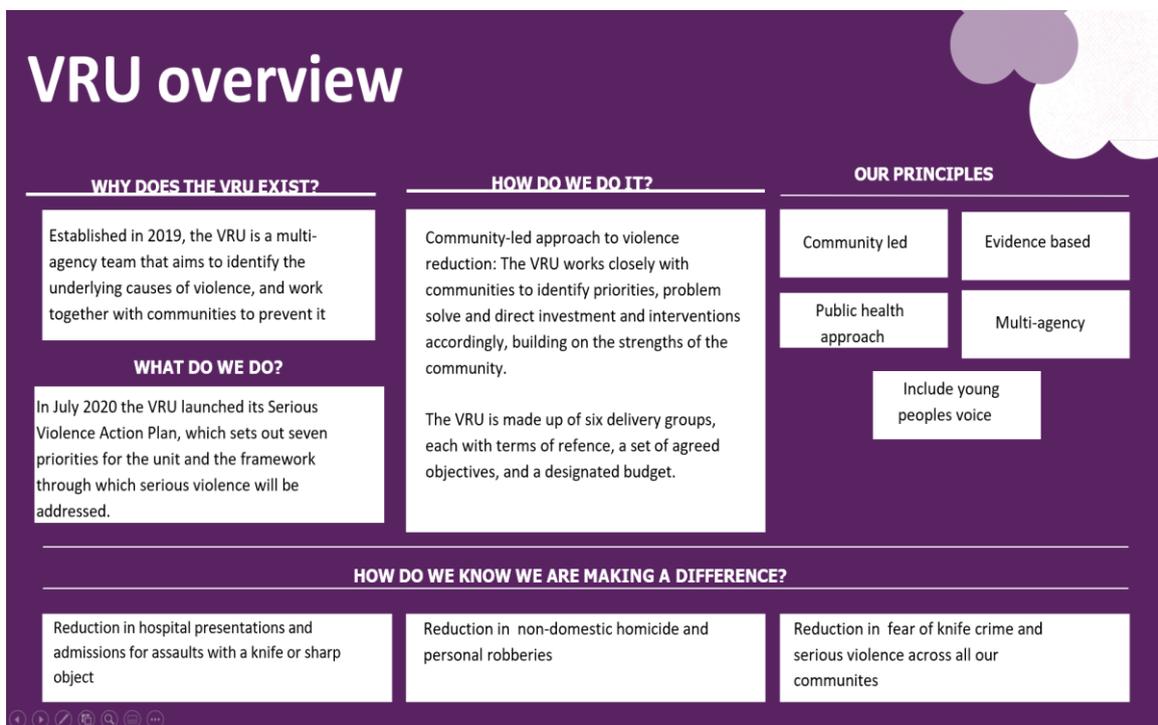


Figure 1: VRU Overview

- 2.1 Figure 1 provides a streamlined overview of the VRU and its core principles, an important one of which is being community-led in its endeavour to tackling violence, particularly in areas most affected by these issues and where inequality is most stark. The overall GM programme is broken down into several delivery stands, which are a

reflection of the seven priorities set out in the [Serious Violence Action Plan](#) and the framework through which serious violence is being addressed.

- 2.2 There are six thematic delivery groups, which provide leadership and partnership coordination in relation to the priorities, each are overseen by VRU subject leads. Not all the seven commitments have a separate strand, because several are cross cutting themes, for example, the work to address the needs of victims should be evidenced throughout the delivery model and not confined to a single strand of delivery. The Victims' Lead attends most delivery groups and ensures good representation is achieved regarding victim-related issues.
- 2.3 The VRU has nurtured a productive relationship with each of the ten GM Local Authorities and a significant proportion of the VRU financial resource has been devolved to the ten GM Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in order to commission services on a local level which are aligned to priorities identified within the VRU's Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA). As a direct result of VRU funding, CSPs have engaged with 33,108 young people, 80 families, and provided trauma and ACEs training (adverse childhood experiences) to 500 plus staff throughout 2021/2022. This, in-turn, has enabled the VRU to extend its reach into local partnerships and communities, to socialise and embed the core principles of the programme with many of its partners.
- 2.4 Moving into a new phase of funding, especially with a multi-year settlement, it is recognised that this presents an important opportunity to further improve and develop the work to reduce violence in GM. In view of this, the VRU is committed to strengthening its relationships with key partners, particularly in Health, Children's Services and Local Authorities, and to ensure that the programme supports and complements other strategic priorities both at regional and local levels.
- 2.5 Moreover, in the aftermath of each of the four tragic murders of young people involving other young people, the VRU has fully engaged with each district to provide support and advice, which has included a range of interventions from different parts of the VRU programme, from our hospital based 'Navigator Programme' which involves on-site youth workers who provide support and advice to young victims of violence to targeted policing and youth work provision etc, all of which has been positively received.
- 2.6 The VRU also launched the [#SpeakingOutCouldSaveALife](#) campaign which is designed to encourage young people, parents, and teachers to speak out if they are

concerned about a young person. To April 2022, over 460,000 people have viewed the video clips which include the testimonials and advice of a Head Teacher, a young person and two community out-reach and support workers.

2.7 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor also committed to hosting a VRU Community Roundtable Event which took place on 1 April 2022 and was Chaired by the retired NW Director of Prosecutions, Nazir Afzal. In attendance was the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chief and Deputy Chief Constable for GMP, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Police and Crime, and a broad representation of community organisations, campaigners and activist's from across GM. The event was well received, and was both constructive and informative, with a commitment for a further event being planned later this year.

2.8 Police Home Office GRIP Funding

In addition to the Home Office funds made available to the VRU, there is a dedicated resourced for police related activity which takes on a more operational response to ongoing day to day emerging threats of violence. The police managed GRIP elements of the VRU are moving forward to a more sustainable problem orientated policing method. Police districts are currently submitting funding applications backed by data illustrating violence hot spot locations. As well as the data aspect, the applications include a clearly defined response to the issues driving crime in each individual hot spot. The police element of the VRU is also in the process of uplifting their establishment to include officers, support officers and an analyst who will become violence problem solving experts, advising policing districts and capable of deploying to hot spots or areas in the aftermath of a serious incident to support local police.

3. Data Sharing and Strategic Needs Assessment

3.1 The work of the VRU is evidence led, and the VRU has a well-developed Serious Violence Data Dashboard which allows registered users to display the data by time, person, and place, as well as download the (anonymised) underlying data to conduct their own analysis. The dashboard data includes A&E attendances for assault, hospital admissions due to violence, ambulance calls out for assault and weapon

related injuries from the Northwest Ambulance Service (NWAS), and police recorded violent crime from Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

- 3.2 The VRU ensures that our work is targeted to places of need and continually strives to make certain that partners have access to the data and understand how to use it. In Summer 2021, the VRU conducted the 'Summer Violence Suppression Project' which involved the VRU team working with CSP partnerships, including the police and providing them with a unique data product to help focus and target resources in areas of highest demand. The product was generated from the GM Violence Dashboard, mentioned above to develop a snapshot of where and when violence is taking place. This enables a better-informed partnership response to so-called 'hotspots' where there is a higher prevalence of violence.
- 3.3 From the outset the VRU was required to produce a Strategic Needs Assessment, which is updated and refreshed annually. The year ending 2021 report contained several recommendations that have since been delivered by the VRU. This included:
 - 3.3.1 The implementation of the Navigators project and ongoing research in relation to the cohort.
 - 3.3.2 GMVRU is now a key partner in the implementation and delivery of multi-agency trauma-informed training, as well as ensuring interventions are trauma-informed.
 - 3.3.3 Interventions that work on the deeper drivers of violence, including perceptions of gender roles and cultures of violence acceptability. These are being tackled through interventions such as the VRU's communications campaigns but also the Mentors in Violence Programme (MVP). The MVP is a peer-led leadership and bystander programme which offers excellent opportunities to discuss a range of current social issues within an educational framework where positive relationships, and health and wellbeing are key.
 - 3.3.4 Young people should be central to the formation of interventions, which has been particularly the case in the development of the "I am Greater" campaign, as well as the Community-led Programmes which have consistently involved young people in all co-design and co-production sessions.
 - 3.3.5 The Community-led Programmes alliance model, which is a partnership of local Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, including grass-roots providers, has ensured these groups are leading the work. This model has also allowed the increased use of grassroots providers at tertiary intervention level after

serious incidents of violence, and often take place in the form of a bespoke and sensitive response to community trauma.

- 3.4 Following the resumption of routine life without COVID-19 related restrictions, the VRU is starting to be able to demonstrate impact of the programme on longer term trends in violence, as well as the system and workforce changes of the VRU's multi-agency approach.
- 3.5 Building upon the previous SNA, the latest refresh (March 2022) has provided an opportunity to collate our data (both qualitative and quantitative) into one place, and examine temporal, geographical and demographic trends to inform commissioning and priorities going forward. The recommendations are outlined below:
 - 3.5.1 Support early years work with early investment and work at a younger age
 - 3.5.2 Provide more information and support for parents/carers when they have concerns about their child's involvement in violence.
 - 3.5.3 Continue Navigator-style approaches and specialist youth work. These roles should be part of the multi-disciplinary community response and have a key role to play in helping young people engage with wider services.
 - 3.5.4 Community-led delivery Programmes have demonstrated the benefits for local areas of working in alliances, where community organisations in an area share expertise, work together to apply for funding, coordinate activities, and link to statutory services.
 - 3.5.5 Further develop the StreetGames community sport audit and analysis tool as an evidence-based approach to delivering the GMVRU vision for the role of community sport.
 - 3.5.6 Ensure GMVRU and partners' communications and interventions are based on positive messaging about young people's futures rather than a singular focus on negative consequences of violence and associated imagery. Research has indicated

that feeling unsafe has is a serious risk factor for carrying a knife and communications that perpetuate the narrative that young people are unsafe exacerbate the issues.

- 3.5.7 Develop further research and interventions to test how to shift cultural norms around knife violence.

4 Key Initiatives

- 4.1 The VRU funds a wide range of interventions at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels which is detailed within the Annual Report (Appendix 1). However, below is an example of some of the more prominent areas of investment.

Navigators Programme

- 4.2 The VRU Hospital Navigator Programme (12-month pilot) was introduced in May 2021, to enable immediate support and subsequent advocacy for young people (aged 10- 25) presenting at hospital with violence related injuries. The Navigator's main aim is to help young people recover, reduce risk of further violence in retaliation, reduce repeat victimisation and offending, reduce exploitation, and help guide young people with longer-term needs to suitable GM community services. This offer has now been enhanced to accept community-based referrals due to additional Home Office 'Teachable Moments' funding. This allows for more upstream preventative work where a risk has been identified. To April 2022, over 300 referrals had been received.

- 4.3 In the future the VRU intend to continue to develop Navigator-style approaches and specialist youth work to support young people and communities, as part of the multi-disciplinary community response, given the key role they have to play in helping young people engage with wider services. An initial implementation evaluation report of the Hospital Navigator Programme has been produced by our evaluation partners at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), and the recommendations will be used to inform this next phase.

Community-led Programme

- 4.4 The VRU's flagship Community-led Programme, already referred to in this report, takes an innovative approach to young people's participation and co-creation, is now live within six areas across Greater Manchester. In each area a multi-method approach to engaging with communities is adopted to ensure that the VRU are listening to what is important to them and works with them to co-design the solutions within their community. This has included focus groups, youth and community

engagement sessions/workshops, face-to-face meetings, community tours with residents, and surveys.

- 4.5 In Newbury, Bolton, the Community-led Programme was successfully established through extensive engagement with the community. It was identified that many families struggled to engage with statutory services and in response, an alliance of local organisations was commissioned to enable delivery of a wide variety of interventions including community sport, targeted mentoring, and youth and community work. To April 2022, 461 young people aged under 25, and 201 people over 25 have engaged in interventions, including 48 families who have received support from a family engagement worker. MMU are undertaking an independent evaluation of the implementation of the Community-led Programmes, within the six pilot areas, together with the overarching governance of the programme.
- 4.6 In 2022/2023 the VRU intend to establish Community-led Programmes within the remaining four areas (Trafford, Wigan, Rochdale, Stockport); The VRU will also be working with 10GM to recruit Community-led Coordinators who will be based within the VCSE sector to support the communities and the Strategic Lead in the roll-out and sustainability of each Community-led Programme.

'I am greater' campaign

- 4.7 The VRUs flagship campaign, 'I am greater' is targeted at 10–17-year-olds across Greater Manchester. The campaign aims to increase self-esteem, aspirations, and social unacceptability towards violence.
- 4.8 Phase one of the campaign was launched in May 2021, and promoted positive community stories by showcasing inspirational case studies/stories of young people from across GM – including those who have been directly affected by serious violence – speaking about why they're 'greater' than violence and their hopes and aspirations for the future. This phase also aimed to increase confidence among parents to speak to their children about violence and signpost to further support. Phase one achieved over 8.7 million impressions.
- 4.9 Phase two of the campaign was launched in April 2022 and provides 13–25-year-olds across Greater Manchester the skills, knowledge, and confidence to be greater

than violence. It focuses on empowering young people to de-escalate negative situations, whether online, at school, college, university, or amongst their peer group.

5 Media Coverage

5.1 To raise awareness of the work of the VRU, a number of media opportunities have been pursued in the past 12 months. The VRU has secured coverage on national, BBC Morning Live, and multiple local news outlets including ITV Granada Reports, BBC North West Tonight, BBC Radio Manchester, Manchester Evening News, BBC North West Politics. This coverage has enabled the VRU to inform the general public that the VRU is working together with partners and the community, to address serious violence and its underlying causes, and to demonstrate the impact of the VRU.

6 Conclusion

6.1 As outlined within this report, whilst COVID-19 has been extremely challenging to both the VRU team and partnerships, significant work has taken place, too many to do justice to within this report. Furthermore, as restrictions have lifted many more people have been able to receive support from the interventions commissioned by the VRU and there are multiple examples, many of which are included in the 2021/2022 Annual Report (Appendix 1).

6.2 The principle of being 'community-led' continues to play a dominant part in the programme of the VRU and the Greater Manchester Mayor has taken several opportunities throughout the year to publicly endorse the work that is taking place particularly within our Community-led Programmes.

6.3 Visibility is critical to the work of the VRU and communicating key messages to partners and the general public is an ongoing priority. The VRU are really pleased with the progress made during the course this year and firmly believe we are now a recognisable and familiar brand. The VRU website and various social-media led initiatives have been great assets to the programme and have truly enhanced the profile of the VRU. Our campaign work has received exceptional coverage both locally and nationally and we are proud of the progress we have made, especially with the 'I am greater' campaign, which continues to be informed and led by young people.

6.4 The VRU is very much an established part of the framework of a whole GM-wide system and continues to be a good example of the ongoing commitment to do things in partnership. As referenced throughout the report, by galvanising the new multiyear funding on offer, and maintaining integrity to the VRU's principles, more will be done to

assist and support schools, communities and families that are worried about their children being affected by violence. The programme is committed in its efforts with primary schools to work with children at an even younger age to prevent issues developing, and with a particular focus on transition to secondary school when emerging problems can become amplified and more severe. The forthcoming Serious Violence Duty provides an opportunity to build even stronger partnerships with local authorities and other key organisations at a local level, to further a shared understanding of the issues affecting communities and delivering community-led programmes of work to really get to the heart of the problem. By investing in these relationships, and involving communities in problem-solving, the aim of creating a safer Greater Manchester for all of its residents will be strengthened and made more possible.

Partnership working and cooperation resides at the centre of this work and the VRU is committed to further investing in these essential relationships, especially with the VCSE sector. As the VRU and the wider programme moves into this next business period, there is confidence and belief that GM has the necessary tools and capabilities to make the necessary impact on the circumstances that lead people to be harmed and affected by violence.