

GMCA Scrutiny Committee

Date: 16/10/2023

Subject: 'Greater Than Violence' GM Violence Reduction Strategy

Report of: Kate Green, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester

Purpose of Report

To inform members of the Scrutiny Committee of the background and current position with regards to the Greater Than Violence Strategy and its development, including on consultation and engagement with partners and the public; obtain the endorsement and support from the members of the committee, and provide an opportunity to receive feedback and identify any gaps or omissions in the strategy.

This report provides an overview of activity that has taken place so far in the strategy's creation. It provides a summary of partnership activity and engagement that have taken place to inform the direction and content of the strategy, which is founded on two pillars, Prevention and Response, with five principles underpinning these themes.

Recommendations:

That the committee reviews the proposed strategy, and considers the following questions:

1. Is the strategy sufficiently comprehensive, measured and balanced against the remit of the GM Violence Reduction Programme outlined below, and does it feel proportionate and appropriate to the PCC's wider obligations and priorities?
2. Given the role of the GMCA and the critical nature of this collaborative piece of work, the 'Partnerships for Change' principle is of particular significance. Does the Committee consider this principle will bring about the influence and engagement required?

3. Is the committee satisfied with the balance between the two key pillars of the strategy (Prevention and Response) and that interdependencies between the two have been accurately reflected throughout the strategy?

Contact Officers

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Note the impact assessment summary provided. The assessment completed takes an overview approach, considering the strategic intent of the Greater Than Violence Strategy and collective ability to, over time, achieve that strategic intent.

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>The strategy contains specific commitments to reducing violence against those with protected characteristics, such as race, gender & sexuality</p> <p>The strategy will commit to ensuring that the voices of victims remain at the heart of all strategic priorities within the strategy, informing strategic planning & commissioning for the next 10 years. By taking a public health approach to violence reduction, the needs of vulnerable individuals will be considered when writing each commitment within the strategy.</p> <p>The strategy contains commitments to supporting wider access to community centres targeted at young people but is not explicitly aimed at improving access to public services</p> <p>The strategy contains extensive commitments to ensuring that the GM response to serious violence is more community led, which ensures adherence to all principles of Public Service Reform. In addition, The VRU have engaged with the PSR team to consult with their views on the strategic direction of the strategy.</p> <p>By seeking to reduce violence and increase the role in the community in leading on responses to serious violence across localities, the strategy will contribute to increased community cohesion.</p>	
Health	G	<p>The strategy takes a public health approach to serious violence and acknowledges that we need to work in partnership with other GM strategies- such as GM Moving- to achieve this.</p> <p>The strategy seeks to work in collaboration with other strategies- such as the Greater Manchester Strategy- to recognise that the mental health and wellbeing of GM residents- to recognise that by improving the wellbeing of GM residents, incidences of serious violence can be reduced.</p> <p>The strategy contains a commitment to collaborating with GM Moving</p> <p>Not directly acknowledged within the strategy</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>n/a</p>	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	<p>The strategy seeks to improve public safety by reducing serious violence across GM</p> <p>Yes- by reducing serious violence</p> <p>The strategy will commit to ensuring that the voices of victims remain at the heart of all strategic priorities within the strategy, informing strategic planning & commissioning for the next 10 years. By taking a public health approach to violence reduction, the needs of vulnerable individuals will be considered when writing each commitment within the strategy.</p> <p>The strategy seeks to reduce serious violence, increasing community safety for residents across GM</p> <p>n/a</p>	
Housing			
Economy			
Mobility and Connectivity			
Carbon, Nature and Environment			
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		<p>The Greater Than Violence strategy is primarily focused on convening the broad coalition of partners required across GM to tackle the root causes of serious violence, and provide swift and effective enforcement when issues of serious violence do occur. Therefore, it does not directly affect carbon emissions. However, it seeks to collaborate at all times with other strategies- including the Greater Manchester Strategy- and as such, the commitments within the strategy will always seek to play their part in contributing to making GM Carbon Neutral by 2038.</p>	
Further Assessment(s):	Equalities Impact Assessment		
G	A	R	RR
Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	Negative impacts overall.

Risk Management

By consulting widely with as many stakeholders as possible, including the public, the VRU have aimed to reduce any risk to a minimal level.

Legal & Financial Considerations & Consequences

No immediate legal or financial concerns arise, however at the instruction of the Mayor, this will be a 10 year strategy, and as such, financial commitments will be required over the next 10 years. The current Home Office grant funding agreement for the Violence Reduction Unit runs until March 2025, and funding beyond that date will be subject to future government spending reviews.

Number of attachments to the report: 1

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

- **Draft of the Greater Than Violence Strategy (submitted to the Scrutiny Committee with this report)**

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No

GM Transport Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25th October 2023

The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) was formed in 2019 and primarily consists of a team of subject leads and experts from sectors across GM including Police, NHS, Education, Public Health, Probation, Community and Youth Justice. In July 2020, the VRU launched its Serious Violence Action Plan, setting out seven priorities based on local data and intelligence, and consultation with the community. These priorities were:

- Support an improved criminal justice response to all forms of serious violence.
- Support community and voluntary organisations to deliver activities and interventions in areas of highest need.
- Ensure families and communities that are affected by serious violence are effectively supported through our place-based offer.
- Ensure victims of violent crime receive appropriate and timely support.
- Create a dedicated Violence Reduction Unit for Greater Manchester.
- Work with Community Safety Partnerships and Local Safeguarding Boards to implement a place-based approach to tackling serious violence.
- Collaborate with schools, colleges and alternative provision to prevent violence.

This action plan underpinned the VRU's Public Health approach to serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention with a focus on children and young people. Central to its approach are the Community Led Programmes, an alliance of local VCSE organisations in each borough of GM that the VRU has committed over £1.6 million towards since 2019.

Following progress made since this action plan's inception, the VRU are currently writing a GM Violence Reduction Strategy which in turn will feed into a refreshed Violence Reduction Delivery Plan to replace the existing 2020 Action Plan. The proposed strategy has the backing of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, and is intended as a 10 year plan to govern and shape violence reduction activity in Greater Manchester.

The VRU have engaged widely with a variety of stakeholders, including internal and external pan-GM governance boards, the public (via a public consultation in summer 2023 that resulted in 259 responses) and the community (having held a well attended VCSE sector consultation event in Manchester on 19th July 2023). The VRU have written to various partners to consult on their views, including the ten GM Local Authority Chief Executives and the ten Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships.

The VRU additionally sought to recruit community members with lived experience of serious violence ('Experts by Experience') from across Greater Manchester to carry out a piece of work to develop a series of recommendations to enable the VRU to become more community led. These recommendations underpinned several of the community led and disproportionality commitments within the strategy, ensuring the voices of those with lived experience are embedded throughout.

A comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan was produced when work on the strategy began, which led to meetings with 65 executive/governance boards, statutory partners, and community organisations (including visits to the VRU Community Led Programmes by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor) over the course of its development. The strategy will be presented to the Combined Authority on 24th November for final sign off, following which it will be publicly launched on 12th December.

The strategy is based on two pillars: Prevention and Response. It has sought to balance these two pillars to give reassurance to the public on GM's response to incidences of serious violence, while retaining emphasis on the critical nature of prevention and early intervention within the public health approach to serious violence. Ultimately, the strategy reflects the fact that preventing violence requires the participation of a broad coalition of partners (e.g. Health, Criminal Justice, Education etc), whilst ensuring there is a strong message to the public that incidences of violent criminality will not be tolerated.

Five key principles will underpin the strategy in the context of these two pillars, with concrete commitments arising from each that reflect consultation with key partners, including the public, VCSE organisations, Police, Fire, Probation and Youth Justice amongst others. The five principles are:

Partnerships for Change: Invest in partnerships to secure system and cultural change to prevent violence in the long-term.

Multiagency working is a driving principle of our approach to violence reduction and significant investment has been made to ensure partners across the system, both statutory and in the Voluntary and Community Sector, are directly involved in this programme of work. The VRU already has representation from Youth Justice, Greater Manchester Police, National Health Service, Education, National Probation Service, Public Health, Voluntary and Community Sector, Sport, Academia, and Local Government, and the existing action plan utilises these partnerships to good effect in order to deliver on the commitments set out in that document. The strategy builds on this, recognising that a public health approach which rests on the principles of a community-led programme is about involving

people in dialogue and decisions about improving lives and the day-to-day experiences of community members, their environment and access to good opportunities. Uniting key partners, the various public bodies and statutory organisations, together with a large and complex voluntary and community social enterprise sector, will therefore be critical to the strategy's success.

The strategy will contain a set of commitments intended to be shared between partners that will align with other important GM-wide commitments. Whilst areas such as criminal justice, education, transport, work and skills, children and adolescent safeguarding are obvious overlaps, the strategy will also link in with the commitments and principles set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy, Public Service Reform, the Gender Based Violence strategy and GM Moving, for example.

The new Violence Reduction Strategy will take a life course approach as outlined in the 2023 GM VRU joint strategic needs assessment. This will require a system wide mechanism to ensure people can be reached and receive the necessary services. Health is viewed as a key enabler in this work, and a continued commitment to working closely and aligning priorities with the health sector will be required in order to maximise the full benefits of a whole system approach.

The strategy will benefit from strong partnerships with and between local authorities, statutory providers of services, and the VCSE sector, which provides bespoke and expert support and innovation. Investing at a place-based and local level, where individuals' needs are more readily understood, will ensure services can be more responsive and ultimately improve life chances.

Equality, Equity and Justice: Deliver responses to violence that recognise the relationship between inequalities, disproportionality, and violence to create a fairer and more equal society, so that everyone across Greater Manchester can live, work, and study in a connected and positive way.

Inequality is a common factor in many of the adverse outcomes that are experienced across Greater Manchester's communities. The issues of inequality and disproportionality have also been a repeated feature of the consultation process, including in discussion of how to respond to the needs of the people the strategy is aiming to support, and how services are commissioned.

Available data and statistics paint an all too familiar picture which illustrates the disproportionate way in which people from minoritised communities experience the

challenges and negative consequences of violence and its associated factors. The new Violence Reduction Strategy presents a clear opportunity to build on the learning and experiences of the VRU and its partners to start to tackle as well as challenge some of the issues which underpin the causes of inequity, discrimination, and injustice in society. Over the last year there has been a notable reduction in hospital data regarding individuals being treated for violent injury, and whilst this is encouraging, it remains the case that someone who resides in the top 10% most deprived communities is 4-5 times more likely to present at A+E for violent assault injuries. We will ensure the strategy addresses this disproportionality, and also contains commitments to address the need to tackle attitudes, societal norms and underlying inequalities that foster gendered forms of violence and hate crimes.

Community Led: Ensure that services and interventions are community-led, valuing the voice of communities in how services work with them, and ensuring communities are at the heart of problem-solving and decision making to tackle violence.

The VRU and its partners recognise the critical nature and role of community in all aspects of work to tackle and reduce violence, and the strategy will be bold in its vision regarding the role of communities in reducing violence. Over the last three years the VRU has worked closely with the VCSE sector and other partners to establish a 'community-led' approach to reducing violence. This has required investment of time and resource, actively listening to local people about local issues and supporting them to identify, design and implement solutions at a place-based level.

It is important that the VRU's conversations with communities avoid focusing only on knife crime and more generalised issues of street violence; emphasis also needs to be placed on such issues as violence in the home, coercive control, and stalking and harassment (both in person and online, given that 60% of GMP's stalking and harassment cases in Q1 23/24 were perpetrated online). We will engage with our diverse communities to tackle all forms of violence.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and Trauma Informed: All services across Greater Manchester will become trauma-responsive so we can work together to reduce the impact of trauma on future behaviour and outcomes.

Preventing and reducing domestic violence needs to be central to achieving a trauma responsive city region. 64% of children and young people in the youth justice system have witnessed or experienced abuse and violence in the home (of whom 6% have experienced sexual abuse). The impact of adverse childhood experiences on the incidence of serious

violence cannot be ignored, and a whole system approach to violence reduction is needed to address this.

From year one the VRU has invested a significant proportion of its budget both directly into the GM-wide ACEs and Trauma Programme, and also through its devolved funding to local authorities. The VRU has also ensured other commissioned services and interventions are trauma responsive. For example, all hospital Navigators funded across our GM-wide Navigator programme are Trauma Informed, ensuring an effective trauma responsive service for victims of serious violence, whilst our upcoming Gender Based Violence schools curriculum programme - which will see a VCSE organisation partner up with 3 primary and 3 secondary schools across GM to develop a curriculum around Gender Based Violence and changing the behaviour of young male pupils - will take a trauma informed approach. In addition, significant VRU resources have been invested in staff training and workforce development, prioritising training workers, practitioners, and officials on the frontline of delivery in required skills and awareness of the impact of trauma.

Early and Timely Intervention: Invest in services which take a preventative approach to individuals at risk of violence and associated harms.

Whilst the VRU programme has commissioned a number of services that operate within the realms of tertiary provision, the vast majority of the programmes that have been funded are those predicated upon the principles of prevention and early intervention. This approach is in line with the public health framework which provides a clear rationale for this important part of the work to reduce violence. Seeking to understand, identify and respond to incidents and opportunities which present much earlier on in people's life experiences is critical to reducing violence and associated harms.

The work that the VRU commissions in education settings will help to ensure that issues of toxic masculinity and misogyny are a central focus of our work with young people. The VRU has begun to address this via its Education Gender Based Violence project, which will see a VCSE organisation develop material on Gender Based Violence for primary and secondary curriculums.

The strategy is underpinned by the VRU's communications and engagement work. Public campaigns can be an effective method of prevention, and the strategy will be supported by effective campaign and a range of communications activity. We will ensure that violence reduction communications are not siloed, connecting to and reflecting campaigns to ensure they complement one another, such as connectivity between the 'I am Greater' and '#isthisOK?' campaigns.