

Police, Fire and Crime Panel

Date: 20th November 2023

Subject: Organised Crime Annual Update and Forward Look (Challenger, Modern Slavery & Trafficking)

Report of: Damian Dallimore and Sian Payne

Purpose of Report

To provide Police and Crime Panel members with an overview of Greater Manchester partnership response to serious and organised crime.

- National policy set by Home Office and NCA
- Greater Manchester Challenger Partnership is a broad partnership working together to deliver the Greater Manchester Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2022-25
- Deliver against the '4Ps' of Prepare, Prevent, Pursue and Protect.
- SOC threat assessment informs thematic priorities.

Recommendations:

1. The Police and Crime Panel are asked to note the contents of this report

Contact Officers

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Report authors must identify which paragraph relating to the following issues:

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Long term positive results expected regarding public safety, vulnerability of people, safer and stronger communities, and those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Risk Management

Risk management is built into the approach to tackling serious and organised crime, under the Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE) process.

Legal Considerations

None identified

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Annual budgets are provided by GMCA and GMP to support delivery of the strategy.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None identified

Number of attachments to the report: 1

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable

Background Papers

- National SOC Strategy 2018
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- National Crime Agency Annual Plan 2023/24
- Greater Manchester Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2022-25

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

Not applicable

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable

1. Background

Programme Challenger is Greater Manchester's partnership response to serious and organised crime (SOC). It draws on the expertise and insight of public, private and voluntary and community sector organisations operating in Greater Manchester and beyond. Responding to the problem of SOC is not solely the responsibility of the police and the criminal justice system; it requires collaboration with organisations from all sectors as well as the communities with whom they work. Programme Challenger provides this system-wide collaboration across Greater Manchester to effectively tackle the threat of SOC.

2. National Picture

SOC is a Government Priority, with the [SOC Strategy 2018](#) setting out the national framework to tackle it, overseen by the Home Office. SOC is defined by how criminality is carried out, rather than what criminality is committed. The framework sets out four key objectives, known as 'the 4Ps', and it is expected that a partnership approach will be applied to delivering on these objectives:

- Prepare
- Prevent
- Pursue
- Protect

SOC is identified by the Home Secretary in the Strategic Policing Requirement as one of the key crime threat areas. The National Crime Agency leads on the national law enforcement response to deliver on national priorities, set in conjunction with the Home Office and based on the Home Secretaries strategic priorities. As part of the national governance around SOC, Greater Manchester's Deputy Mayor is one of the SOC co-leads for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, working with and for PCCs to raise the profile and response to this issue in Force areas and ensure connectivity with the wider SOC system.

Although SOC includes modern slavery and human trafficking, these are covered in detail through the Home Office's Modern Slavery Strategy 2014 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015. An announced refresh in 2022 of the Modern Slavery Strategy has not yet been forthcoming. Other Government strategies that influence tackling SOC are the [Beating Crime Plan](#) and [From Harm to Hope: the Ten Year Drug Strategy](#).

3. Greater Manchester's Partnership Approach

SOC is a pervasive form of criminality often viewed as operating at the national or international level. In Greater Manchester, the partnership approach that has developed over the last ten years has recognised that SOC operates at all levels, and has direct consequences for individuals and communities in Greater Manchester. This can be as a result of significant incidents such as firearms discharges, but is also seen in localised drug dealing, acquisitive crime such as burglary and car thefts, and the associated exploitation of young people and adults. These crimes are organised crime and are happening in Greater Manchester neighbourhoods. Challenger's whole system, partnership approach is key to tackling this.

Programme Challenger's partnership model is delivered through Greater Manchester's SOC Strategy, first launched in 2018. A refreshed [SOC strategy for 2022-25](#) has recently been published, alongside a [Plan on a Page](#).

The strategy provides the framework through which partners will drive forward work to tackle SOC across the city-region and Districts. Across Greater Manchester, it informs, is informed by, and supports the delivery of:

- the GM Standing Together Plan (Priority 1, specifically protecting vulnerable people from criminal exploitation) and (Priority 2, specifically tackle organised crime) and District Community Safety strategies and plans;
- The Greater Manchester Gender Based Violence strategy, particularly linked to modern slavery and human trafficking (predominantly sexual exploitation and domestic servitude);
- The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit and the upcoming 10 year Serious Violence Strategy, particularly regarding the links between organised crime, county lines and youth violence;
- Delivery and development of Greater Manchester's Complex Safeguarding response, working with children and young people affected by serious and organised crime.
- Operation Vulcan, the partnership approach to tackling criminality in Cheetham Hill/Strangeways and Piccadilly Gardens.

3.1 Governance, strategic and cross cutting updates

A Governance review has been underway across Challenger. The following changes have been implemented over the last 12 months to support the continued delivery of the Challenger objectives under the refreshed Greater Manchester SOC Strategy, published in May 2022:

- Clear thematic priorities set across Challenger
 - o County Lines
 - o Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)
 - o Organised Immigration Crime (OIC)
 - o Western Balkan criminality

The wider serious crime division teams lead on the following thematic priorities, which contribute to delivery of the Greater Manchester SOC Strategy:

- o Drugs
- o Firearms
- o Homicide Prevention
- Refresh of the SOC tactical meeting to reflect thematic priorities and 4P Plan delivery
- Refresh of the Challenger Executive Board. Membership expanded and a new Independent Chair appointed to oversee continued development.
- Standardisation of Challenger approach locally, with packs provided to all Districts to support consistency in approach taken (including, for example, standard agenda's, confidentiality statements, governance approaches).
- Draft SOC Strategic Outcomes Framework developed to measure the success of the Challenger partnership in delivering the SOC Strategy across Greater Manchester.
- Transition from Operation Magpie to Operation Vulcan facilitated, to enhance the partnership response to criminality in Cheetham Hill.
- Operation Gatehouse is the pro-active response by Programme Challenger into the ongoing issues caused by Serious and Organised criminality within prisons across the Greater Manchester. Since April 2023, regular deployments have taken place at prison establishments carrying out searches, supporting prison staff with seizures and delivering exploitation awareness training. This operation has since been lauded as best practice and is now being rolled out across the North-West region by neighbouring police forces.

- Deputy Mayor Kate Green continues to hold joint lead for Serious and Organised Crime for the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, along with Alison Hernandez. In October 2023, Kate delivered an input at the National SOC Conference highlighting the importance of partnership working and the role of PCCs and Deputy Mayor's in supporting this.
- 'We Move' engaged with 51 individuals at risk of engaging in SOC.

3.2 Thematic Priorities update

County Lines:

- Prepare: A Senior Policy and Partnership Officer has been allocated to County Lines to support the implementation of Prepare, Prevent and Protect activity.
- Pursue: Two focused weeks of action have been completed in 2023. 33 warrants were executed and 39 arrests made, with a total of 13 lines closed across the weeks.
- Pursue: GMP exceeded line closure targets for county lines in 2022/23 (85 lines closed), and are currently exceeding targets for 2023/24 (115 lines closed against a target of 120 by end of March 2024)
- Prevent: Challenger and the Deputy Mayor have funded 98 Crossing the Lines sessions, delivered in Primary Schools to Years 5 and 6. Over 4,500 9, 10 and 11 year olds have been reached by the programme, which highlights in an age appropriate way what County Lines and criminal exploitation is and enables discussions between the young people and adults about issues raised.
- Protect: GMP partners are working with Catch-22 across Greater Manchester to ensure children and young people being exploited by county lines are safeguarded and supported to exit exploitation.
- Protect: St. Giles have worked with Challenger to deliver a mentoring programme, funded through St. Giles, in Stockport and Tameside, receiving referrals directly from complex safeguarding and youth justice services and working with those at risk of and/or experiencing exploitation.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking:

- Prepare: Commissioned Causeway to coordinate the Greater Manchester Anti-Slavery and Trafficking NGO Forum, to continue to increase the knowledge and understanding of the VCSE sector in particular.
- Prevent: Launched the 'Home Truths' modern slavery campaign, raising awareness of labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude in residential areas.
- Prevent: In 2023, targeted awareness raising and training sessions have been delivered to over 1,600 individuals across Greater Manchester in over 40 separate sessions and events. This includes delivery to 390 GPs to raise awareness of domestic servitude to increase awareness of the signs and how to report related concerns, linked to the Home Truths campaign.
- Pursue: Successful secured the prosecution of an offender subject to a Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order in partnership with Essex Police. The order had been applied after the individual was convicted of facilitating travel for the purposes of exploitation. They breached the order and were sentenced to six years in prison for the breach.

Organised Immigration Crime:

- Prepare: OIC lead in Challenger joined the Greater Manchester Migration and Asylum meeting as GMP representative, supporting direct connection into Local Authority teams working in this thematic area.

Western Balkan Criminality:

- Prepare: Western Balkan SOC Community Coordinator function extended beyond previous focus of Bury only, to reflect better understanding of the threat.
- Prepare: Research completed into pathways of Western Balkan communities into criminality, to inform ongoing Prevent and Protect activity.

Drugs

- Prepare: Greater Manchester Combatting Drugs Partnership established, with strategic delivery plan. Focus on:

- Breaking drug supply chains;
- Delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system;
- Achieving a generational shift in the demand for drugs.
- Prevent: Greater Manchester has the best post-release continuity of care rates in the country, with 64% being picked up by community treatment services.

Firearms

- Prevent: Number of temporary firearms licenses reduced from 570 to 0, reducing risk of access to and criminal use of firearms.

Homicide Prevention

- Prepare; Prevent: Project management and support of the Youth Endowment Fund Another Chance programme in Manchester and part of North Trafford to reduce involvement in serious violence by predominantly 18-25 year olds, implementing a focussed deterrence approach. The programme has identified almost 250 potential participants aged 14-25.

4. Current Greater Manchester SOC threat and forward plan

At a city-region level, assessment of the SOC threat is held by GMP and shared appropriately through partnership arrangements at city-region and District level, under the identified thematic priorities. These are risk assessed, often in partnership with other organisations, to enable a holistic understanding of the threat posed to individuals, communities and beyond.

The following sets out key areas of focus for Challenger in the next 12 months:

Cross-cutting:

- Prevent: Across all priority areas, offender management will be enhanced, with a focus on ensuring that appropriate orders are applied as part of the investigation and prosecution process, and proactively managed to reduce offending.

County Lines and Drugs:

- Prepare: The Partnership Officer will be supporting delivery of Prepare, Prevent and Protect objectives, including working with partners to embed the 10 year from Harm to Hope strategy via the Greater Manchester Combatting Drugs Partnership.
- Prevent: The Trapped exploitation campaign will be relaunched to raise awareness of exploitation and action to take, following extensive consultation with end users provided by Hitch.
- Pursue: The County Lines team will focus on utilisation of enhanced intelligence development functions and will be piloting technological solutions to support their work.
- Protect: Operation Runner will support the early identification and safeguarding of potential victims of criminal exploitation.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, and Organised Immigration Crime:

- Across all four objectives, a working group comprising GM NHS, Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Boards, Designated Adult Safeguarding Leads, GMCA and GMP will continue to tackle increasing concerns regarding care sector workers. The group will enable improved understanding of the issue and action to take to safeguard individuals and ensure continuity of care across the sector.
- Prepare: Bespoke specialist organised immigration crime training is being delivered to Senior Investigating Officers across GMP to enhance capability in responding to these offences.
- Prevent: Continue targeted domestic servitude awareness raising sessions with GPs across Greater Manchester and within Domestic abuse specific services.
- Prepare: Regionally, police force representatives and the North West Regional organised Crime Unit will develop joint communications across North West forces to deliver consistent messaging to officers and staff to:
 - recognise and identify organised immigration crime
 - collate and manage intelligence correctly
 - investigate OIC criminality
- Protect: Scoping of a project to explore use of technology to identify potential sexual exploitation online and seek to reduce potential harm, linked to work being undertaken under the Gender Based Abuse strategy.

Case study example – Use of Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders

In November 2021, Ion Raducan received a 27-month prison sentence for arranging or facilitating the transport for a person for exploitation as a prostitute under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Alongside the conviction, a 10-year Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order was secured by GMP, along with a deportation order. In 2023, Raducan was arrested in Brighton, in breach of both the deportation order and the Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order: Raducan had hired a car and had possession of a mobile phone, both of which were not allowed without informing the police. Sussex police were proactive in their dealing with Raducan and worked together with Greater Manchester Police and Immigration Enforcement to enable appropriate charges to be brought. Raducan was sentenced to eight years in prison, reduced to six years as a result of a guilty plea at trial.

Western Balkan Criminality:

- Work will continue across Prepare, Prevent and Protect to better understand the way in which criminality occurs, including the exploitation of individuals. Capability and capacity building will be focused on, leading to effective operational response, intelligence management and proactive operations.
- This will include working closely with the Public Service Reform Team to identify opportunities to support individuals in the asylum system, particularly by identifying and reducing risk of exploitation.

Homicide Prevention:

- Continued support of the Another Chance programme to support a reduction in serious violent crime, including homicides and near misses, in the Manchester and North Trafford areas. This is due to run until December 2025.

Appendix 1: Greater Manchester SOC Strategy Plan on a Page

Programme Challenger Strategy 2022 - 2025
Greater Manchester's partnership approach to tackling serious and organised crime in all its forms

Vision

To enable individuals and communities to be free from the harm caused by serious and organised crime through the strength of our partnership.

Aims

-  1. To increase our understanding of current and emerging threats (through effective horizon scanning), to enable threats, opportunities, and demand to be proactively mapped and predicted
-  2. To support an enhanced partnership response through effective information sharing and intelligence development
-  3. To work collaboratively to develop innovative, evidence based, preventative approaches, which focus on identifying and supporting those at risk of engaging or re-engaging in serious and organised crimes
-  4. To pursue relentlessly disruption and targeted action against the highest harm serious and organised criminal, stopping the problem at source, and capitalising on opportunities to seize assets from criminals at every opportunity
-  5. To support, through our partnership, opportunities to build resilience to serious and organised crime within communities, with a focus on preventing people becoming victims and perpetrators
-  6. To ensure that victims receive appropriate and timely support and are safeguarded from harm

Objectives	Measures
PREPARE the Greater Manchester partnership to tackle and mitigate the impacts of serious and organised crime	Partners are aware of the Serious and Organised Crime threat in Greater Manchester, with all serious and organised crime threats fully mapped and risk assessed, with effective partnership 4P plans in place to tackle them
PREVENT organised criminal activity from taking place	Ancillary and offender management orders are used effectively to prevent continued criminality and enable better sentence planning from court to prisons and community
	Individuals and support agencies are aware of what serious and organised crime is and how to identify it early
Use all of our powers to PURSUE people involved in serious and organised crime	Serious and organised crime threats, including organised crime groups, priority individuals and vulnerabilities, are disrupted and dismantled
PROTECT our communities and individuals from the harm caused by serious and organised crime	Communities are provided with access to funding and opportunities to build resilience against serious and organised crime, enabled by financial assets recouped from proceeds of crime in relation to organised crime groups
	Support the development of effective safeguarding of children and adults who are affected by serious and organised crime



Tackling serious and organised crime together



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