

## **GMCA**

Date: 24th November 2023

Subject: 'Greater Than Violence': A Ten-Year Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Strategy

Report of: Kate Green, Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime, Fire & Criminal Justice)

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### **Purpose of Report**

The attached final draft of the ten year "Greater Than Violence" strategy is the first of its kind for Greater Manchester, setting out some clear, long-term ambitions for how GMCA and its partners will tackle violence, through effective prevention and response and by dealing with the root causes of violence. This report sets out how this strategy was developed, including details on the comprehensive consultation process that has informed this work. The purpose of this report is to gauge the views of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on content and strategic intent of the draft strategy in advance of its intended launch on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Recommendations:**

That the GMCA reviews the draft "Greater Than Violence" strategy and considers the following:

1. Note the contents of this report and the accompanying Violence Reduction Strategy.
2. For the GMCA to approve and commit to a ten-year strategic plan to reduce violence across Greater Manchester.
3. To commit to work with the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and its partners to implement the commitments set out in 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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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	
<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
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.
		<b>RR</b> 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 so at this stage the financial picture beyond this date is uncertain.

## **Number of attachments to the report: 1**

## **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

The Scrutiny committee were supportive of the scope and scale of the Greater Than Violence strategy's ambition, particularly the fact it is a 10-year strategy with key links to education and other key thematic areas. Questions were raised by several members of the committee regarding the strategy's read across to other GM strategies with key interfaces with serious violence, such as the Gender Based Violence strategy, Drugs & Alcohol strategy, and the work of Programme Challenger to tackle drugs supply and county lines. However, the committee were satisfied that whilst the Greater Than Violence strategy was not seeking to own these issues, the delivery plans that will take the strategy forward into actions would address all key themes that intersect with the strategy.

## **Background Papers**

**N/A**

## **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

**25<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

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

- 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 VCFSE organisations in each borough of GM to which the VRU has committed over £2.6 million since 2019.

Significant progress has been made against the action plan since 2020 and latest figures show that the VRU and its partners have contributed to a 34% reduction in homicides this year compared with their peak in 2022 (and 12% reduction compared with pre-COVID rates in 2019). Figures for hospital admissions due to assault by sharp object across GM

have reduced by 26% in the year ending June 2023 compared to the previous year (compared to a 12% fall across England and Wales in the same period).

Despite these improving outcomes, the figures on knife crime and violence more generally are high compared with many other city regions in the UK and more needs to be done to prevent and tackle violence in all its forms.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Constable are clear that GM needs an ambitious, ten-year strategy that seeks to improve the response to violence when it happens, as well as focusing on addressing the root causes of violence in society by investing in prevention and community-led programmes of work. Attached is the final draft version of this strategy, entitled “Greater Than Violence”, which has been informed by evidence of what works, partnership data on violence in GM and a comprehensive engagement strategy with communities and a variety of partnership organisations and boards.

The draft 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 guiding principles are articulated in the draft strategy in the context of these two pillars, with clear commitments underpinning these principles. The five principles are:

- 1. 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 is bold in its vision regarding the role of communities in this endeavour. Over the last three years the VRU has worked closely with the VCFSE sector and other partners to establish a ‘community-led’ approach to reducing violence. This has required investment of time and resource, actively listening to 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).

## **2. 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 course 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 involves working with a local charity and a group of schools to 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 a range of communications activity with our partners. The VRU 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.

## **3. 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 VCFSE 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 plan. The draft ten-year 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.

The strategy contains a set of commitments intended to be shared between partners that will align with other relevant GM-wide commitments. Whilst areas such as criminal justice, education, transport, work and skills, child 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 draft strategy takes 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.

**4. 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 a 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 draft 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 the number of people attending hospital following an assault, 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 hospital for violent assault injuries. The VRU 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.

**5. 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 the forthcoming Gender Based Violence schools curriculum programme - which will see a VCFSE 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.