

GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL

Date: 21st March 2024

Subject: Operation Wildflower – The Financial Implications.

Report of: Assistant Chief Constable Chris Sykes

Purpose of Report

The aim of this report is to provide the current financial implications of Operation Wildflower to the Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel, as requested at the Deputy Mayor's Executive on 17th January 2024.

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to note the content of the report and consider the continued resourcing and financial challenge posed by the ongoing policing operation.

Contact Officers

Chief Superintendent Mark Dexter - Mark.Dexter@gmp.police.uk

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

No implications in the context of this report

Risk Management

No implications in the context of this report

Legal Considerations

No implications in the context of this report

Financial Consequences – Revenue

There are significant costs associated with the operation and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has forecasted significant spend between October 2023 and March 2024.

The cost to policing is significant, both in actual financial impact but also in the less visible abstraction of staff resulting from increasing the visibility of patrolling and changes in duties to police short notice protest.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no capital implications.

Number of attachments to the report:

N/A

1. Executive Summary

On Saturday 7th October, the proscribed organisation Hamas launched a terrorist attack in Israel; this generated widespread international condemnation. The Jewish communities of Greater Manchester (GM) were significantly impacted, with many families affected. Israel responded to the attack with a military operation to target Hamas, in Gaza.

Since the attack, there continues to be a series of rallies, protest demonstrations and vigils across the country, including in Greater Manchester. These take place on a regular and sometimes daily basis and have been predominantly linked to pro-Palestinian support, with numbers in Manchester City Centre approaching 5000+ on occasions. GMP’s assessment is that, outside of London, Manchester has seen the most significant protest activity.

Wider events across the GM area continue to take place, which include other unrelated demonstrations and sporting fixtures.

2. Detail

The policing response to rallies, protest demonstrations and vigils across GMP has been managed through a dedicated Public Order Public Safety command structure. This has brought consistency in approach focused on maintaining safety, community cohesion and minimising disruption. Where possible, resources have been drawn from duty time staff, including the utilisation of Specialist Operations Officers to minimise the financial impact on the Force.

There is no allocated budget for this additional cost, and it is likely to be drawn from the Force Operational Policing reserves.

The actual and projected costs to the 31st March 2024 are as follows:

Op Wildflower - actual overtime costs to 24 February 2024 and forecast costs to 31st March 2024

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Actual overtime 7th October 2023 to 24th February 2024	183,374	258,040	149,975	107,187	70,706	-	769,282
Forecast overtime costs 25th February to 31 March 2024					26,117	92,926	119,043
Total overtime costs to 31st March 2024	183,374	258,040	149,975	107,725	99,823	78,500	877,437

Op Wildflower - duty time costs to 24 February 2024 and forecast costs to 31st March 2024

Duty time 7th October 2023 to 31 March 2024	17,598	50,017	7,026	12,151	4,824	8,488	100,104
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3. Conclusion

The conflict continues and the reporting the situation in Gaza and Israel continues to concern communities across GM.

GMP expect to maintain its policing response under Operation Wildflower for the first quarter of 2024 and this decision is continually reviewed at the Wildflower Gold Group.

Whilst there appears to be a stabilisation of community concerns, tensions are still very much dependant on international events which are difficult to predict.

The cost to policing is significant, both in actual financial impact but also in the less visible abstraction of staff resulting from increasing the visibility of patrolling and changes in duties to police short notice protest.