

Greater Manchester Police Fire and Crime Panel

Date: 18th September 2024

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's partnership response to serious and organised crime, and forward view.

- 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: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable

Background Papers

- National SOC Strategy 2023
- 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

The [SOC Strategy 2023](#), which sets out the national framework for tackling SOC, was published under the Conservative Government. While there is no indication from the new Government that there will be any significant shift in the national approach to SOC, this may change over the coming months.

SOC is defined by how criminality is carried out, rather than what criminality is committed. There are four key objectives, known as 'the 4Ps', and a partnership approach is applied to delivering on these objectives:

- Prepare
- Prevent
- Pursue
- Protect

SOC has consistently been identified 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.

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 eleven 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.

This has been increasingly recognised at a National level, and the NPCC has produced guidance for police and partners emphasising the local approach to tackling SOC.

Programme Challenger's partnership model is delivered through Greater Manchester's SOC Strategy, first launched in 2018. We are currently delivering against a 2022 – 2025 SOC strategy, summarised by our Plan on a Page (see Appendix 1).

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 10 year Serious Violence Strategy, particularly regarding the links between organised crime, county lines and youth violence;
- The Greater Manchester's Complex Safeguarding Strategy, particularly linked to children and young people at risk of or experiencing exploitation;
- Operation Vulcan, the partnership approach to tackling criminality in Cheetham Hill/Strangeways and Piccadilly Gardens; and Op Luka, the operational partnership response to children and young people at risk of or experiencing exploitation in the Piccadilly area.

3.1 Governance, strategic and cross cutting updates

Challenger is in the third year of delivering against its 2022 – 2025 strategy, and a refreshed strategy will be published in 2025/26. Challenger is reviewing the key thematic priorities currently, but has continued to deliver against the priority areas of:

- County Lines
 - Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)
 - Organised Immigration Crime (OIC)
 - Western Balkan criminality
 - Drugs
 - Firearms
 - Homicide Prevention
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- The thematic priorities will be reviewed to ensure continued relevance in line with GMPs strategic assessment and Force Control Strategy, and alignment with partner priorities.
 - An Information Sharing Agreement has been circulated to all Challenger partners.
 - Challenger has delivered a range of Continued Professional Development days to Neighbourhood Policing leads. These have been focused on developing the understanding of SOC, and the ways in which existing neighbourhood policing team activity is delivering disruptions to tackle SOC. They have also delivered capability and capacity building inputs to upskill officers.
 - Two Policy and Procedure sub-groups have been established to develop GM principles and approaches to:
 - Adult exploitation
 - Threats to life involving children and young people

3.2 Thematic Priorities update

County Lines:

- Prepare: The Senior Policy and Partnership Officer allocated to County Lines drives work within the Prepare, Prevent and Protect objectives. The focus is delivering on the implementation of the national 10 year Combatting Drugs Strategy, in line with the Greater Manchester Combating Drugs Partnership.
- Prepare: Learning programmes for professionals working to tackle county lines and support children and young people affected were co-curated with the Greater

Manchester Complex Safeguarding Hub. Two weeks of activity saw 1,178 professionals, parents and carers engage with 19 sessions covering topics such as:

- Grooming and entrapment
 - Online safety
 - Working in a neuroinclusive way
 - County Lines signs and indicators
- Prevent: An immersive experience for young people at risk of exploitation was piloted with GMFRS Training and Safety Centre in Bury, engaging with complex safeguarding teams and the young people they work with to deliver a multi-faceted session raising awareness of county lines, exploitation, healthy relationships, substance misuse, knife crime, and fire safety.
 - Pursue: In 2023/24, the GMP County Lines team exceeded the line closure target set by the Home Office, achieving 155 closures against a target of 120. In the first four months of 2024, the team has achieved 64 line closures against a target of 150 closures by March 2025.
 - Pursue: Over the two weeks of action in 2023/24, the GMP executed 81 warrants, resulting in 124 arrests, 125 people safeguarding and 15 National Referral Mechanisms submitted.
 - Protect: Catch-22, the Home Office funded Prevent and Protect support agency to work with children and young people at risk of and experiencing exploitation, are now well embedded in the city region. In the 12 months to July 2024, 144 referrals had been received into Catch-22, with 48 young people being open to the service at the end of June 2024.
 - Protect and Prevent: Support delivered by St. Giles Trust and the We Move diversionary programme have received 119 referrals in total across Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside, Manchester and Stockport, working with young people at risk or exploitation and involvement in serious and organised crime since April 2023, diverting young people away from risk.
 - Protect: In April 2024, Operation Trinket was launched to identify at risk child criminal exploitation victims and offenders 'hidden' in missing from home data. This has led to a number of CCE investigations being adopted by the County Lines Team and it is likely this will be identified as the grassroots of positive practice by HMICFRS.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT):

- Prepare: Since July 2023, targeted awareness raising and training sessions have been delivered to over 1,200 individuals across Greater Manchester in over 40 separate sessions and events. This includes supporting training 300 modern slavery champions at Manchester Airport to support identification of potential victims travelling through the airport.
- Prepare: Training has been delivered to over GPs and GP surgery staff to raise awareness of MSHT, specifically domestic servitude. This has led to three disclosures of concern, where none were received from GPs in the previous 12 months.
- Protect: Greater Manchester's Justice and Care Victim Navigator continues to support survivors across the city region, and is currently support 8 survivors. This includes one man who was exploited in his own home, with extreme violence perpetrated against him which was filmed and shared online.
- Protect: In August 2024, a pre-NRM intervention commenced, delivered by Causeway Charitable Services. This provides contact for potential victims who have been submitted to the National Referral Mechanism for support, but have been waiting longer than 5 days for a decision. Contact will be made with all affected individuals to ensure they are able to access support in the interim, and know that they have not been forgotten by the system.

Op Palanga – Sexual exploitation in Stockport

In July 2020, Stockport Challenger identified an individual, Nicholas Moxham, as recruiting women as sex workers from homeless shelters and similar locations in the Borough. He went on to rape and sexually exploit these women, including filming various incidents. The Stockport Challenger team were supported by Modern Slavery Unit (MSU) Tactical Advisors and also engaged the Justice and Care Victim Navigator, based with Programme Challenger and the MSU, very early in the investigation to enable effective support and engagement to be maintained with the victims. The Victim Navigator was able to provide ongoing contact and support, along with Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH), enabling wraparound support to be provided for all the victims, particularly as some of the women had continued sex working.

The involvement of the Victim Navigator supported ongoing engagement with the victims through two failed trials, which ensured they remained supportive of the prosecution and enabled successful conviction. In July 2024, Moxham received a life sentence with a minimum of 20 years for modern slavery, rape and sexual offences.

Organised Immigration Crime (OIC):

- Prepare: GMP have delivered significant training sessions in respect of OIC awareness using partners (Immigration Enforcement Criminal Financial Investigation teams, National Document Fraud Unit) to improve understanding in this developing SOC area
- Prepare: GMP have developed the modern slavery tactical advisor network to incorporate OIC considerations enabling more effective advice to be given at the inception of referrals / investigations
- Prepare: GMP, supported by partners, have significantly increased intelligence collection in this area to become the force with the most OIC related intelligence submissions nationally.
- Prepare: GMP have mandated the hydra training at Inspector rank to develop understanding and awareness around dealing with a clandestine migrant event. All Inspectors / Det Inspectors will receive this training over a 12 month period. GMP have also completed a clandestine migrant walk in strategy to improve how we deal with these incidents from a safeguarding and intelligence gathering perspective
- Pursue: GMP have adopted OIC investigations within the SOC investigation environment, identifying trends in respect of birth registry related immigration fraud and exploitation related to cannabis cultivation.
- Pursue: Project Asset has been implemented around OIC, building on GMPs expertise in asset recovery and is an emphasis on stripping the proceeds made by those involved in OIC. This is a unique offer amongst police forces, and has already seen tens of thousands of pounds recovered, has increased awareness, and secured criminal charges.
- Protect: GMP, GMCA, NHSGM and the Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) have been working with the Home Office to develop a cross sector approach to concerns around exploitation within the care sector. This has included creating a guide for the sector, developing pathways into alternative sponsorship, creating a GM pathway for potential victims and coordinating training.

Western Balkan Criminality:

- Prepare: In March 2024, the Home Office funded Western Balkan Community Coordinator project was completed. The project led to a significant increase in

Western Balkan related intelligence being submitted, with over 500 received in 2023/24.

- Prevent: Engagement visits were conducted to 15 businesses in North Manchester. This led to the 13 arrests and 12 charges.
- Protect: Visits to businesses led to the identification of three people who were submitted to the National Referral Mechanism as potential victims of modern slavery.

Drugs

- Prepare: Greater Manchester Combatting Drugs Partnership continues to deliver on local priorities in delivery of the national 10 Year Combatting Drugs Strategy. Particular focus has been via the drugs early warning system, raising awareness of synthetic opioids, particularly the increased use of nitazenes as an adulterant.
- Prevent: Relationships have been developed between regional prisons and the GM Drugs Early Warning System lead, to develop closer links between prisons and drug issues identified within the estate, and the information held by the early warning system.
- Prevent and Pursue: GMP launched Operation Viable in response to synthetic opioids, particularly nitazenes. Arrests have been made in relation to the distribution of nitazenes, and GMP works closely with partners to identify nitazenes quicker and circulate prevent advice through the forces contribution to MANDRAKE (GM drugs testing) and the Drugs Early Warning System.

Firearms

- Prepare: GMP launched Operation Viable in May 2024, to provide specialist support to districts within 24 hours for every firearms discharge and mitigate the threat of firearms across the city region. Since the operation commenced, support has been provided for 19 firearms recoveries and 6 firearms discharges across 23 incidents. Of these incidents, 16 saw advice given and 3 received direct assistance which led to quicker forensic results and charges whilst suspects were in custody. 6 investigations were fully adopted by central serious and organised crime group syndicates, which reduced demand on district resources.

- Prevent: Whilst nationally and regionally there has been a reduction in firearms seizures recovered, GMP are bucking this trend and saw more seizures in the first quarter of 2024/25 than were seen in 2023/24.
- Prevent: At the end of 2023/24, 78 firearms were successfully recovered across Greater Manchester, the highest number across North West forces.
- Prevent: Operation Ceasefire continues to operate, targeting individuals who pose the highest threat regarding firearms and subjecting them to increased disruption activity to prevent continued offending.

Homicide Prevention

- Prepare; Prevent, Pursue, Protect: The Youth Endowment Funded Another Chance programme has been running since July 2023, with 266 individuals aged 14-25 identified as eligible for the programme. Another Chance is a focussed deterrence programme, offering support for those who wish to desist from criminality, but ensuring targeted enforcement where they do not.
 - 239 people have been considered by partnership panels for appropriateness for the support offer.
 - 140 of these have been referred and 28 have been identified as ineligible (due to e.g. moving out of area, receiving a custodial sentence). The remaining have been deferred as a result of current offending levels.
 - 46 have accepted the offer of support and started working with the provider, Power2. 32 have explicitly refused the support.
 - 5 individuals have been referred to the enforcement element, with disruption plans being developed or in place for these.

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. 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:

- Support the ongoing implementation of Clear, Hold, Build sites across Greater Manchester, led by Operation Vulcan.
- Support roll out of approaches and principles around adult exploitation and threats to life involving children and young people, as developed by the Policy and Procedure sub-group of the Challenger Executive Board.
- Ongoing engagement with partners to secure sign up to the Challenger Information Sharing Agreement.

County Lines and Drugs:

- Prepare: Delivery of programmes of Learning across partners in Greater Manchester, further developing activity that works with and directly engages young people at risk.
- Prevent: Development of an interactive prevention package, co-designed and delivered with practitioners and young people, to enable group-based prevention.
- Pursue: The County Lines team will focus on the Home Office closure target of 150 lines by March 2025, including delivery of a week of action in November 2025.
- Protect: To further support the identification and safeguarding of children and young people at risk of exploitation, upskilling professionals and raising awareness of support and diversionary offers available.
- Protect: GMP will be launching a pilot of naloxone carriage, to enable officers to administer the potentially life saving response in instances of certain types of drug overdoses. This will also include the distribution of drug testing strips.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, and Organised Immigration Crime:

- Prepare and Protect: Support the roll out of the Greater Manchester Protocol to respond to exploitation in the care sector, working with NHSGM.
- Prepare and Protect: Support the implementation of pathways to alternative employment for workers experiencing poor employment or displacement in the care sector.
- Prepare: Development of awareness raising sessions for delivery to the voluntary, community and faith sector to enable increased identification and reporting of potential modern slavery and human trafficking.

- Protect: Finalise scoping and implementation of a pilot to enable online engagement with sex workers and those at risk of sexual exploitation to reduce potential harm, linked to work being undertaken under the Gender Based Abuse strategy.

Western Balkan Criminality:

- This thematic priority is being reviewed as workstreams developed from Home Office funding have been absorbed as business as usual.

Homicide Prevention:

- This thematic priority is being reviewed, as this is primarily led through the Violence Reduction Unit.
- Continued support of the Another Chance programme to support a reduction in serious violent crime, including homicides and near misses, focussing on increasing the number of people engaged in the support element to desist from crime.







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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SALFORD

STOCKPORT
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TRAFFORD
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