

DMPC Decision – PCD 1614

Title: VRU borough re-allocation of Serious Violence Duty grant funding

Executive Summary:

PCD 1365 approves the VRU to accept and utilise funding from the Home Office in relation to the Serious Violence Duty, and then to allocate this funding equally across all 32 boroughs.

Robust monitoring of spend by boroughs is carried out throughout the year to ensure that the VRU have remain sighted on potential variances including any likelihood of underspend. We are reaching towards the end of 2023/2024 and there are currently two boroughs who have reported at the end of Q3 that they will unlikely be able to spend the full funding granted to them by the VRU. Conversely, there are other boroughs identified that are seeking additional funding to support their violence reduction delivery locally.

Approval is therefore sought to reallocate funding across 2023-2025 of the above funds where boroughs self-identify an underspend, offering that equivalent grant funding to boroughs where they show greatest need and likelihood of delivery. This would also work to ensure that London is able to fully benefit from the grant funding offered from the Home Office as we are unable to carry funds over financial years therefore underspent funds cannot be claimed.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

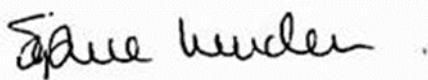
1. Approve the VRU to reallocate in-year grant funding provided to a borough when utilising the Home Office Serious Violence Duty grant funding across 2023-2025, when a borough reports an end of year underspend to ensure grant funding is fully maximised.

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

I confirm I have considered whether or not I have any personal or prejudicial interest in this matter and take the proposed decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct. Any such interests are recorded below.

The above request has my approval.

Signature



Date 12/03/2024

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PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DMPC

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Introduced by government through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, the Serious Violence Duty, which commenced on 31st January 2023, requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence.
- 1.2 In September 2022, the VRU received notification from the Home Office of indicative funding allocations for 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25; with these allocations confirmed in December 2022. This funding is specified by the Home Office as being allocated to *labour costs*- the costs of working towards meeting the Serious Violence Duty, such as facilitating meetings, and completing the Strategic Needs Assessment of Violence, and subsequent Serious Violence Strategy; and *non-labour costs* – the costs of carrying out interventions to tackle serious violence. Funding must be used within the year in which it is allocated (so cannot be carried forward by the VRU).
- 1.3 As all boroughs are required to produce a Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence Strategy, they have all incurred staff costs towards these products and have therefore been able to offset these costs by utilising the *labour* funding which they have been allocated. Several boroughs have encountered difficulty in achieving spend of the *non-labour costs*, due to factors such as waiting to complete their analysis to see where the additional funding could effectively extend their impact in their borough, or due to significant staffing changes meaning that it has been difficult for the relevant department to commission and deliver new projects within the timeframe.
- 1.4 PCD 1365 and PCD 1263 approves the VRU to allocate the grant funding out to boroughs equally amongst London's 32 boroughs. Grant agreements were signed by all boroughs in early 2023, with all boroughs indicating that they would make full use of the funding within each year.
- 1.5 VRU monitoring of spend has been robust, seeking end-of-quarter spend reports, as well as in-quarter forecasting, and liaison with boroughs throughout to understand how their projects are delivering and ask that notification is given of any SVD funding that would not be spent. Towards the end of Q3 and beginning of Q4, the VRU have been notified of two boroughs which have not been able to make use of their *non-labour* allocation.
- 1.6 Violence in London remains a critical issue, and the VRU want to see this funding made use of, rather than returned unspent to the Home Office. Given that the deadline for use of any 2023-24 Home Office SVD funding is 31 March 2024, it is not practical to run a full competitive application process for boroughs to apply for additional funding, and then to enable boroughs to notify community-based providers, and meaningfully deliver this work before the end of March.

- 1.7 The VRU therefore seek authority to redistribute any SVD funding which a borough will not make use of, to another borough. This is to ensure that the funding allocated to London is spent fully. Decisions will be made in accordance with a public health approach; allocated to areas suffering current trends of, or persistent levels of violence; and in which the VRU have seen a good history of being able to deliver preventative work.

2 Issues for consideration

- 2.1 The Home Office grant funding has been allocated to the Violence Reduction Unit to use as part of delivering the three Home Office outcome measures to tackle and reduce violence in London (and in accordance with the commencement of the Serious Violence Duty in January 2023).
- 2.2 Recognising that Local Authorities would have the responsibility under legislation for delivery of the duty and would incur additional costs in producing the Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy as required by the duty, the VRU opted to allocate this funding equally to boroughs; however, was under no obligation to allocate the funding in this way.
- 2.4 While allocation at short notice in 2023-2024 will see some boroughs receive additional funding without a full application/bidding process, taking this expedited approach is of greater benefit to violence reduction in London than running a bidding process, which if carried out with less than three months until the funding must be used, will see less time overall to deliver any further work. An alternative approach of dividing any unused funding between all other boroughs would see smaller, less-impactful amounts distributed, and would also be restrictive due to the process of completing grant agreements.
- 2.5 If events occur during the 2024/25 financial year which mean that the VRU becomes aware of further unspent grant funding, and it is practical to run an application process for boroughs to bid for this, then this will be done.
- 2.6 To not reallocate the unused grant funding would mean underspend that the VRU cannot claim from the Home Office annual allocations. Where London is experiencing challenging times responding to violence, it would be problematic to not claim all that is offered to support reducing and preventing violence for the capital.

3. Financial Comments

- 3.1 The proposals within this decision are to maximise the Home Office grant funding through reallocation of borough underspends to other boroughs which demonstrate greatest need and likelihood of delivery. Ongoing monitoring will be required to ensure the total allocations don't exceed the annual Home Office grant allocations which the VRU receives.
- 3.2 The funding received by the VRU from the Home Office Serious Violence Fund is set out below.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Labour costs	137,941.30	647,435.38	616,333.64	1,401,710.32
Non-labour Costs	206,621.25	623,888.22	316,430.36	1,146,939.83
Total	344,562.55	1,271,323.60	932,764.00	2,548,650.15

- 3.3 When allocated equally, each borough received the following annual total funding, which could not be moved between strands or financial years:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Labour Costs	4,310.67	20,232.36	19,260.43	43,803.46
Non-labour Costs	6,456.91	19,496.51	9,888.36	35,841.78
Total	10,767.58	39,728.86	29,148.88	79,645.32

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1 Paragraph 4.8 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) has delegated authority to:

- Approve all bids for grant funding.
- Approve the strategy for the award of individual grants and/ or the award of all individual grants whether to secure or contribute to securing crime reduction in London or for other purposes.
- The procurement strategy for all revenue and capital contracts of a total value of £500,000 or above, such determination to include decisions on the criteria and methodology to be adopted in the tendering process, any exemptions from procurement requirements, and any necessary contract extensions.

5. Commercial Issues

- 5.1 PCD 1365 approves the direct-award of grants in equal amounts to all 32 London Boroughs for the above fund. COR The justification for the direct award is, in accordance with section 11 of and Schedule 1 of the *Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022* that the Serious Violence Duty requires local authorities to work together and plan and prevent and reduce violence. This decision now seeks approval to re-allocate funding when circumstances mean that a borough has not been able to make use of the amount originally allocated to it.
- 5.2 All 32 boroughs were sent a Grant Agreement for their Serious Violence Duty funding which includes the mandatory requirements, specification, reporting requirements and our outcomes. Any variations to increase allocations from that show in 3.3 will be formally recorded in a variation notice, signed by appropriate representation from the Local Authority and MOPAC CFO.
- 5.3 Officers can confirm that the DMPC has the legal authority to agree this decision in Accordance with the legal framework.

6. Public Health Approach

- 6.1 London's Violence Reduction Unit is taking a public health approach to violence reduction, that is contextual; looking at the context and influences that impact on individuals at significant points in their life. We will ensure that any activity which we decide to grant additional funding to will be rooted in the principles of a public health approach, including the Local Authority working in partnership across organisations, to deliver with and for the communities in their borough.

7. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 7.1 The VRU are not receiving any personal information under this funding. MOPAC and the VRU will adhere to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and ensure that any organisations who are commissioned to do work with or on behalf of MOPAC are fully compliant with the policy and understand their GDPR responsibilities.

8. Equality Comments

- 8.1 MOPAC is required to comply with the public sector equality duty set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires MOPAC to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by reference to people with protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and will be made available on the MOPAC website following approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, for what reason:

Until what date:

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered as likely to be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a **Part 2** form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION	<i>Tick to confirm statement (✓)</i>
Financial Advice: The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal.	✓
Legal Advice: Legal advice is not required.	✓
Equalities Advice: Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.	✓
Public Health Approach Due diligence has been given to determine whether the programme sits within the Violence Reduction Unit's public approach to reducing violence. This has been reviewed and supported by a senior manager within the VRU.	✓
Commercial Issues Commercial issues are not applicable	✓
GDPR/Data Privacy - GDPR compliance issues are covered in the body of the report - A DPIA is not required.	✓
Drafting Officer Lisa Hooper, Senior Manager Community Safety has drafted this report in accordance with MOPAC procedures.	✓
Director/Head of Service: Gary Connors, Head of Service for Community Safety and Prevention has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.	✓

Chief Executive Officer

I have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial, legal and equalities advice has been taken into account in the preparation of this report. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

**Signature****Date** 12/03/2024