

DMPC Decision – PCD 1682

Title: Home Office Grant Funding Alpha -Social Media Hub (SMH) Year six 2024-25.

Executive Summary:

- This paper seeks approval to accept Home Office (HO) grant funding of up to £2,755,000 for an additional 12 months, to continue to fund SMH with the aim of reducing serious youth violence and exploitation.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

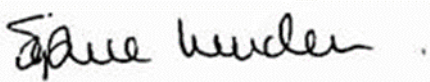
1. Approve the request to accept HO grant of £2,755,000 for 2024-25 to fund SMH.

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 20/08/2024

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

1. Introduction and background.

- 1.1. The Alpha SMH is a fully funded Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) intelligence function that was implemented in June 2019 to support operational teams to effectively tackle the threat posed by Organised Criminal Groups/Urban Street Gangs from their use of social media to generate violence and support criminal activity.
- 1.2. The HO has provided funding for the project for the past five years, which was approved under PCD references 545, 867, 914, 960, 1047 and 1215.
- 1.3. The HO has confirmed funding to support the continuation of the Alpha SMH for an additional year in 2024/25.

2. Issues for consideration.

- 2.1. Social media is a major component of gang related violence and serious organised crime that includes County Lines. Urban street gangs pose a significant threat to young people and the vulnerable to violence, criminal and sexual exploitation is extensive and affects every police force area.
- 2.2. The Alpha SMH provides intelligence and evidence-based methods to tackle gang-related violence and criminality in London, presenting significant benefits to the MPS and Londoners.
- 2.3. With the offer grant funding from the HO, the MPS plans to continue using the funding to mitigate increasing demand by developing innovative solutions, effectively collaborating within law enforcement and with industry providers to provide a better understanding of the scale, risks and to develop solutions collaboratively.
- 2.4. This funding is separate from the HO grant for the continuation of the related project, the "County Lines Social Media Intelligence Network", which was developed to enhance the online capabilities in tackling County Lines (PCD1532).
- 2.5. The MPS has provided assurance that there will be no ongoing financial commitments should additional funding not be provided for 2025/26. Staff will be redeployed across Frontline Policing taking with them skills and experience that can be deployed elsewhere in the organisation to tackle MPS priorities.
- 2.6. In line with the New Met for London Plan, the SMH function will directly impact serious violence and organised criminality. It will also contribute to keeping children, young people and vulnerable individuals safe by reducing opportunity for criminal and sexual exploitation facilitated by the online activity of gangs.

3. Financial Comments.

- 3.1. The proposal seek approval to accept HO grant funding of up to £2,755,000 to support funding of the Alpha SMH during 2024/25.
- 3.2. The funding will cover all expenses related to pay, overtime, and training and operational equipment, as well as all costs related to the role and cost recovery will reflect actual spend.

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.
- 4.2. The legal powers applicable to the acceptance of this Grant will be under Schedule 3, Paragraph 7 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 which provides that,
 - The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the Office.

That includes

 - Entering into contracts and other agreements (whether legally binding or not);
 - If approved, the terms of the grant offered by the Home Office will be formalised between the relevant parties overseen by MPS Finance Team.

5. Equality Comments.

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. The MPS assure that the SMH underwent a full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) at the start of the project, which identified no negative impact to any individual at that stage. The proposal seeks additional funding for an existing function, therefore, there is no organisational change. Due regard and consideration has been taken to assess

equality impact caused by the proposed business change including effective engagement and analysing relevant equality information. As a result, an action plan has been implemented to address potential negative impact to any individual using an Equality Impact Assessment.

- 5.3. The project will contribute towards the London Anchor Institutions Charter, in particular the objectives to Narrow Social, Health and Economic Inequalities, Help Young People to Flourish and Support Our Communities. The supply of drugs and associated violence is known to disproportionately impact on deprived sections of society, with Class A addiction being significantly more prevalent in areas with high levels of social deprivation, and lack of opportunity in these areas can result in young people being drawn into a life of crime and exploitation. The focus of the SMH is disrupting organised criminality and preventing the exploitation of young persons, these have a direct impact on the lives of young people and the communities in which they live.

6. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 6.1. The MPS is subject to the requirements and conditions placed on it as a 'State' body to comply with the European Convention of Human Rights and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. Both legislative requirements place an obligation on the MPS to process personal data fairly and lawfully to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals.
- 6.2. Under Article 35 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Section 57 of the DPA 2018, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) become mandatory for organisations with technologies and processes that are likely to result in a high risk to the rights of the data subjects.
- 6.3. The MPS assure that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been completed in respect of the SMH. The DPIA is currently subject to an annual review and updated. There has been no significant change to the data processing since the last review. The project will ensure a privacy by design approach, which will allow the MPS to find and fix problems at the early stages of any project, ensuring compliance with GDPR. DPIA's support the accountability principle, as they will ensure the MPS complies with the requirements of GDPR, and they demonstrate that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure compliance.
- 6.4. The DPIA concluded the risk of a data breach occurring was low based on current practices. Recommendations regarding data storage and retention have been followed with the use of the MPS approved BOX data storage solution and an updated data retention policy. Ongoing consultation with the Information Assurance and Information Rights units within MPS will be completed to ensure the project continues to meet its compliance requirements.

7. Background/supporting papers.

- 8.1. MPS Paper – HO Grant Funding Alpha Social Media Hub (SMH).

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 – Yes

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: The MPS legal team has been consulted on the proposal.		✓
Equalities Advice: Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.		✓
Commercial Issues The proposal is in keeping with the GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy.		✓

GDPR/Data Privacy GDPR compliance issues are covered in the body of the report.	✓
Drafting Officers Stephen Kalyango have drafted this report in accordance with MOPAC procedures.	✓
Director/Head of Service: The Chief Finance Officer and Director of Corporate Services 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 05/08/2024

