

DMPC Decision – PCD 1768

Title: Cuckooing Development 2025/26/27

Executive Summary:

Across London, the response to cuckooing varies both inside the MPS and across all the Local Authorities. A London Assembly Report from 2023 notes that recorded cuckooing cases have quadrupled in recent years. There has also been a rise in property closures and vulnerable adults needing to be relocated. This report made 10 recommendations to the Mayor, MOPAC and MPS.

An investment of £392,000 over 12 months will allow the MPS to build on existing good practice to tackle cuckooing under Project ADDER, addressing many of the challenges identified and developing a sustainable best-practice model, with the intention of rolling this out as business as usual in the future.

An additional maximum budget allocation of £80,000 will enable the procurement of an evaluation to run alongside the cuckooing project and identifying best practice.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

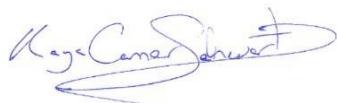
1. Approve the maximum allocation of £392,000 to the MPS for the delivery of a cuckooing project in financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27.
2. Approve the maximum allocation of £80,000 for the procurement of a project evaluation in financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27.
3. Approve the carry forward of £24,000 from the 2024/25 London Drugs Forum budget to contribute to the funding of this project
4. Approve the commencement of a competitive procurement process for the evaluation, and delegate contract award to the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships.

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 17-2-25

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

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Cuckooing is a tactic used by criminals, typically drug dealers, to take over the homes of vulnerable individuals, such as care leavers or those with addiction, physical or mental health issues, and use the property as a base for criminal activity. This is a common characteristic of the county lines business model and can occur in a range of settings such as rental and private properties, student accommodation, and commercial properties.
- 1.2. Across London, the response to cuckooing varies both inside the MPS and across all the Local Authorities. The public cost of one cuckooed premises is roughly estimated to be between £75,000 and £500,000.
- 1.3. A London Assembly Report from 2023 notes that recorded cuckooing cases have quadrupled in recent years. There has also been a rise in property closures and vulnerable adults needing to be relocated. This report made 10 recommendations to the Mayor, MOPAC and MPS.
- 1.4. The MPS propose to build on previous work in this space, addressing challenges identified and developing a sustainable best-practice model, with the intention of rolling this out at business as usual in the future.

2. Issues for consideration

- 2.1. Taking enforcement action against those exploiting others and providing safeguarding to those affected will help Londoners, including children and young people, to be safe from exploitation and other harms associated with drugs.
- 2.2. Enforcement action and the building of local relationships by police around cuckooing also protects wider communities from anti-social behaviour and violence and helps people to feel safe where they live.
- 2.3. It is proposed to deliver a series of activities to address cuckooing in Central North BCU and North Area BCU, for a period of 12 months in 2025/26 and 2026/27, at a total cost of £392,000.
- 2.4. The desired outcomes of this project are to prevent cuckooing, reduce the number of cuckooed premises, safeguard victims of cuckooing and communities, improve intelligence, improve relationships between the police and individuals/communities, and improve partnership working.
- 2.5. Procuring an evaluation of this project to run alongside delivery will enable us to demonstrate the efficacy of different activities in achieving these outcomes, as well as

assessing the processes involved in implementing them. This will support future rollout planning. The maximum budget allocation for this procurement is £80,000.

- 2.6. This project will support delivery against the recommendations made in the 2023 London Assembly report on cuckooing.
- 2.7. The London Drugs Forum has previously heard from partners about the mixed approach to cuckooing seen across the capital. The response varies from borough to borough, as well as housing provider to housing provider. Actions arising from the LDF have included the MPS developing a cuckooing toolkit, which this project will help to establish. Further actions were given to GLA Housing to review processes in place for local authorities and housing associations to tackle cuckooing and to assist in developing a pan-London cuckooing protocol. Again, the funded project will help to advance these actions.
- 2.8. This project would also strengthen links between cuckooing activity and safeguarding/ county lines services. We would like to see enhanced referral pathways between cuckooing fora and the new V&E service, and to consider how that service can support intelligence gathering in the manner previously undertaken by Rescue & Response.

3. Financial Comments

- 3.1. The total budget requirement for this work totals £472,000 across 2025/26 (£354,000) and 2026/27 (£118,000).
- 3.2. £450,000 of the programme will be funded from the Drug Review Implementation budget (one-off budget held in reserves) and the remaining £22,000 is requested to be carried forward from the 2024/25 London Drugs Forum budget.

Activity	2025/26 Budget Allocation	2026/27 Budget Allocation	Total Budget Allocation
MPS delivery	£294,000	£98,000	£392,000
Evaluation	£60,000	£20,000	£80,000
Total	£354,000	£118,000	£472,000

- 3.3. A value for money assessment will form part of the evaluation procurement process.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1. MOPAC's general powers are set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). Section 3(6) of the 2011 Act provides that MOPAC must "secure the maintenance of the metropolitan police service and secure that the metropolitan police service is efficient and effective." Under Schedule 3, paragraph 7 (1) MOPAC has wide incidental powers to "do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of the Office." Paragraph 7(2) (a) provides that this includes entering into contracts and other agreements.
- 4.2. Paragraph 4.13 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) has delegated authority to approve all contract exemptions for £100,000 or above.

- 4.3. Officers must ensure the Financial Regulations and Contract Regulations are complied with.
- 4.4. Officers should ensure that the funding agreements are put in place with and executed by MOPAC and each of the providers before any commitment to fund is made.

5. Commercial Issues

- 5.1 This decision report seeks approval for the maximum allocation of £392,000 to the MPS for the delivery of a cuckooing project in financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27, to proceed to procurement for the provision of a project evaluation and delegate contract award to the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships.
- 5.2 The evaluation procurement which has a budget of £80k, falls below the services threshold of the Public Contract Regulations 2015, a Contracts Finder notice will be published to ensure it reaches a wide range of providers. Quotes will be evaluated by a minimum of 3 evaluators and a moderation session will be undertaken.
- 5.3 It is proposed to split the weighting of this procurement to 80% quality and 20% price.
- 5.4 The actions proposed can be taken in compliance with procurement legislation and MOPAC's Contract Regulations.

6. Public Health Approach

- 6.1 Taking a prevention and early intervention approach to cuckooing supports the Mayor's public health approach to tackling violence and exploitation.
- 6.2 This piece of work has been informed by discussions and feedback from the Violence Reduction Unit.

7. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 7.1 MOPAC 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.
- 8.2 This project is intended to provide protection and support to vulnerable Londoners, particularly children and young people (18-25yrs), adults with disabilities and those

needing care which may include older people. These groups are more likely to be targeted for cuckooing and other forms of exploitation associated with drug supply.

- 8.3. It is not anticipated that this project will have a negative impact on any particular demographics, but this will be reviewed and considered as part of the evaluation.
- 8.4. There is already an Equalities Impact Assessment in place for Project ADDER, and this will be amended to be specific to cuckooing as part of the development of this project.

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

Tick to confirm statement (✓)

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.

✓

Commercial Issues

The Contract Management Team has been consulted on the commercial issues within this report. 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.
- A DPIA is not required.

✓

Drafting Officer

Zoe Hickman has drafted this report in accordance with MOPAC procedures.

✓

Director/Head of Service:

The Head of Policy and Commissioning 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

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Date: 17-2-25