

## **DMPC Decision –PCD 1867**

### **Title Strengthening Fathers Pilot Extension**

#### **Executive Summary:**

The Violence Reduction Unit's (VRU) parenting and families programme is central to its 'whole family approach' to reducing violence. Through building stronger, more resourceful family relationships and enhancing collaboration between agencies, the VRU aims to better support young people and families.

In 2024, the VRU invested £349,591 (CEOD 29/2023) into the 18 month Strengthening Fathers Pilot, a pioneering initiative designed to support young men and fathers in developing healthy relationships, reducing familial conflict and harm, and improving systemic practice across services. The pilot, due to conclude in August 2025, has successfully engaged 410 fathers through culturally sensitive workshops, one-to-one support, and family activities, with a strong focus on working with marginalised communities.

This decision seeks approval from the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to extend the pilot by 12 months, with additional funding of up to £174,796. The extension would build on the pilot's early successes, enhance the reach and quality of the evaluation, and support the longer-term sustainability of the programme. It would also enable continued support for fathers currently engaged, allow sufficient time for the development of a sustainable exit strategy, and strengthen partnerships with probation services, local authorities, and prisons — potentially unlocking future funding opportunities.

Moreover, the extension would bolster capacity-building efforts, embed promising practices across services, and leave a stronger legacy, ensuring the benefits of the Strengthening Fathers Pilot endure well beyond the life of the project.

This decision requests the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to approve an extension to the 18 month pilot, funded through £349,591, for a further 12 months, of up to £174,796 for both lots to build on the impact, improve the reach and efficacy of the evaluation, and enable longer term sustainability.

#### **Recommendation:**

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

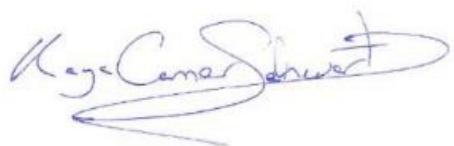
- 1 Approve an extension of the Strengthening Fathers Pilot by 12 months, From Sept 2025 – August 2026, for Lot 1; Father 2 Father for the value £87,500 and Lot 2; Groundworks London £87,296 the total extension value both lots will be £174,796. Increasing the contract award for Lot 1 from £175,000 to £262,500 to for the total contract term from Sept 2025 to August 2026 and Lot 2 from £174,591 to £261,887 for the total contract term from Sept 2025 to August 2026.
- 2 Approve the allocation of £174,796 from existing VRU approved budgets

**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.

**Signature**

**Date** **01/07/2025**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kaya-Caren Stewart".

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

### **1. Introduction and background –**

- 1.1 **London Violence Reduction Unit's Approach** - The VRU's budget enables us to fund a range of ambitious and crucial programmes that are designed to improve the environments, relationships, or behaviours that, if unaddressed and unsupported, may otherwise lead to violence.
- 1.2 The VRUs approach to violence reduction means putting communities, young people and their families at the heart of tackling the issue; and particularly in those parts of London most affected – often taking a place-based approach to violence reduction. This includes work programme interventions to support those neighbourhoods which have experienced sustained and high levels of violence.
- 1.3 **The Strengthening Fathers Pilot** - The Violence Reduction Unit identified a gap in provision and were keen to build on the success of the Parent Carer Champion Network. To this end, they piloted a new programme called 'Strengthening Fathers'. The programme is designed to support by way of bespoke wrap-around service for young men and fathers in developing healthy relationships with their partners and children, to reduce familial conflict and harm. Additionally, the programme aims to improve wider practice in supporting families.
- 1.4 The Strengthening Fathers Pilot (SFP) supports male parents/carers, including young fathers (16-24), in building stronger relationships with their children through a holistic, trauma-informed approach. It focuses on early intervention, positive co-parenting, advocacy, and addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to reduce vulnerability to crime and exploitation. By fostering engagement and resilience, SFP aims to create long-term positive outcomes for fathers, children, and families.
- 1.5 Research indicates that 76% of the male prison population comprises individuals who grew up without a father present. Through consultations with fathers conducted for this pilot, many fathers highlighted that their own experiences of having absent fathers impacted on their own approach to fathering. These conversations highlighted the importance of therapeutic support and assistance in gaining access to their children. Addressing these needs is crucial to breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma and fostering healthy familial relationships and coparenting.
- 1.6 Research has shown that parental conflict negatively affects children, increasing risks of poor academic performance, peer problems, substance abuse, and mental health issues. A 2021 Department for Work and Pensions report links it to lower attainment, higher violence, depression, anxiety, and reduced employability. Community consultations echoed these concerns, highlighting the need to support fathers and strengthen parent-child relationships to foster positive attachments and reduce vulnerability to crime and exploitation.
- 1.7 The SFP pilot currently is being delivered alongside an evaluation, commissioned to assess the programmes implementation (process), impact (or outcomes) and potential for scale/ sustainability. The commissioned evaluation partner has developed a Theory of Change (ToC) , which underpins the evaluation approach, and summarises the pilot's intended impact. The evaluation aims to examine how the pilot is being delivered, assess the difference it is making for fathers and families, identify promising practices, and explore cost-effectiveness. This learning will guide future commissioning and the strategic development of future support.
- 1.8 The interim evaluation report noted early signs of behavioural shifts amongst participating fathers. These included: increased emotional self-awareness, a clearer sense of personal goals, and increased confidence in seeking our support. These shifts in behaviour reflect progress towards the pilot's key

outcomes; improved family relationships, improved emotional wellbeing, and risk reduction (as examples).

- 1.9 The interim evaluation report also spotlights several positive themes relating to implementation (or process). This includes strong signs of partnership working and collaboration between delivery organisations; such as establishing coordinating systems for referrals. The report also highlights a strong sense of shared goals amongst delivery partners and alignment with the VRU's overarching vision.
- 1.10 The evaluation has also identified several challenges relating to implementation. Notably, trust-building with fathers is seen as integral to sustained engagement with SFP services, however, this trust-building is a gradual process which requires time, patience and one-to-one engagement (or person-centred support). The time required to build this trust has meant referral processes can be delayed, delivery providers have also noted that the pressure to meet referral targets risks detracting or diluting this person-centred support.
- 1.11 In summary, early findings from the SFP pilot evaluation suggest that the programme is meeting a clear gap in support, particularly for fathers from underserved communities. The evidence of positive engagement, strong delivery partnerships, and early behavioural and attitudinal change indicates a strong rationale for extending funding. Doing so would allow the programme to consolidate its learnings (including final recommendations from the evaluation), support fathers for longer periods (thus allowing more time for trust to be built), and gather fuller outcome data to compliment the evaluation's findings.
- 1.12 Alongside the evaluation, the VRUs monitoring strategy for the SFP has indicated positive progress towards programme 'reach' and outcomes. Since the programme's inception in April 2024, SFP has successfully delivered services across seven boroughs through two consortium partners: Groundwork London and Father2Father. Together, they support 410 fathers so far through workshops, training, one-to-one ACE support, and family activities, working closely with marginalised communities to provide a culturally sensitive approach to engagement and support. This reach is exceeding expectations and demonstrates a strong demand for the support offered.
- 1.13 Programme outcomes
  - Fathers report improved capability to access peer support.
  - Reduced parental conflict.
  - Improved nurturing and responsive parental relationships (e.g., consistent parenting; good parental supervision)
  - Improved confidence in co-parenting
  - Fathers report improved capability to access peer support.
  - Increased confidence in parenting
  - Fathers are better connected within the family.
  - Improved ability for fathers to advocate for themselves.
  - Fathers report improved Mental health and well-being (ACE)
- 1.14 High level outcomes
  - Improved whole family relationships.
  - Decreased family harm
  - Improved family functioning
  - Improved pathways to support (For marginalised groups)

## **2. Issues for consideration**

Strengthening Fathers Pilot was developed to fill a gap in the delivery of family support work undertaken by the VRU to achieve a key priority area of strengthening families to better support children and young people. This pilot will be ending in August 2025 but having been impacted by a slow start to delivery, and engaging probation services for referral, the pilot would benefit from a longer time period to improve reach, outcomes, and sustainability.

Extending the timeline would further support the ongoing evaluation, scheduled for completion by the end of October, by allowing the evaluation partner additional time to engage with providers and finalise the report findings.

Finally, the VRU intends to consider future commissioning in developing the support for fathers and their children, if further funding was available, and therefore this extension allows the Unit to continue to deliver effective services to communities that most need it to reduce the harm caused through estranged fathers, broken down familial relationships and intergenerational trauma.

### 3. **Financial Comment**

- 3.1. The total budget required for this extension is £174,796 and will be delivered across 12 months (Sept 25 – Aug 26) by the two existing consortium lead organisations. Lot 1 - Father 2 Father £87,500 and Lot 2 - Groundworks London, £87,296.
- 3.2. The contract extension will be funded from the existing approved Parenting Developments budget line as detailed in the table below:

| Item                                  | FY<br>25/26 | FY<br>26/27 | Total           |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Strengthening Fathers Pilot Extension | £53,719     | £121,077    | <b>£174,796</b> |

### 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." This is a broad power, and the initiatives appear to be part of a number of proposals which are aimed at supporting victims of crime to enable the efficiency and effectiveness of the police service. In addition, under Schedule 3, paragraph 7 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. Under MOPAC's Scheme of Delegation, the award of individual contracts of £500,000 and above is reserved to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. This includes the responsibility for signing the contractual agreements.

4.3. Officers must ensure that the arrangements comply with the Financial Regulations and Contract Regulations.

4.4. Officers can confirm that the DMPC has the legal authority to agree this decision.

#### **4. Commercial Issues**

- 4.1. This decision is seeking an approval to extend the Strengthening Fathers Pilot by 12 months, From Sept 2025 – August 2026, for Lot 1; Father 2 Father for the value £87,500 and Lot 2; Groundworks London £87,296 the total extension value both lots will be £174,796. Increasing the contract award for Lot 1 from to £175,000 to £262,500 for the total contract term from Sept 2025 to August 2026 and Lot 2 from £174,591 to £261,887 for the total contract term from Sept 2025 to August 2026.
- 4.2. The award of this contract was carried under The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Section 6. (1) of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 states:
- 4.3. The calculation of the estimated value of a procurement shall be based on the total amount payable, net of VAT, as estimated by the contracting authority, including any form of option and any renewals of the contracts as explicitly set out in the procurement documents.”
- 4.4. Section 72.1 of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 state; Contracts and framework agreements may be modified without a new procurement procedure in accordance with this Part in any of the following cases: provided that any increase in price does not exceed 50% of the value of the original contract.
- 4.5. The above price variation does exceed 50% of the value of the original contract.
- 4.6. Officers can confirm that the DMPC has the legal authority to agree this decision in Accordance with the legal framework.
- 4.7. Regulation 72 of The Procurement Contract Regulations 2015 provides the conditions that must be met to modify a contract, based on the following justifications of this extension request.
- 4.8. The original contract term was included in the ITT documentation. An option to extend was not included as the expectation was all the services would be delivered within the contract term and the overall nature of the contracts has not changed.
- 4.9. The Supplier will be delivering the same service during the extension period and the modification does not in any way alter the overall nature of the contract.
- 4.10. Once this decision has been approved and all documents are completed, a updated contract award notice will be published for transparency purposes.

#### **5. Public Health Approach**

- 5.1. The spend plan takes a public health approach to tackling violence, which means looking at violence not as isolated incidents or solely a police enforcement problem. Instead, this approach looks at violence as a preventable consequence of a range of factors, such as adverse early-life experiences, or harmful social or community experiences and influences.
- 5.2. Evaluation of good practice to answer the question ‘what works and for whom?’ which must also happen before policy and programmes can be effectively scaled up and sustained to contribute to population level outcomes (a core requirement for public health programmes).

5.3. This piece of work has been informed by discussions and feedback from stakeholders including the use of data to take evidence informed approach to investment.

## **6. GDPR and Data Privacy**

6.1. 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. Suppliers will be asked to provide a Data Protection Impact Assessment.

6.2. All contracts will include clear provisions relating to compliance in this area, and in relation to the processing of personal data. These terms have been drafted following consultation with MOPAC's GDPR Project Manager.

## **7. Equality Comments**

7.1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), as a public authority the Deputy Mayor/MOPAC must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (the duty in respect of this last characteristic is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).

7.2. The VRU are committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As public authorities we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

7.3. An equality impact assessment has already been undertaken for the Strengthening Fathers Pilot to ensure that all protected characteristics are considered in the commissioning and delivery of this work.

## **8. Background/supporting papers**

CEOD 29/2023

**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: N/A

**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 (ü)*

**Financial Advice**

The Strategic Finance and Resource Management Team has been consulted on this proposal.

Y

**Legal Advice**

Legal advice is not required.

Y

**Equalities Advice:**

Equality and diversity issues are covered in the body of the report.

Y

**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.

Y

**Commercial Issues**

This is an extension to the original Agreement – due to nature of reason for request no challenge from the marketplace is anticipated.

Y

**GDPR/Data Privacy**

- A DPIA will be carried out where required.

Y

**Director/Head of Service**

The Assistant Director of VRU has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.

Y

**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 24-6-25**

