

DMPC Decision – PCD 881

Title: VRU Bridge-Funding 2021-2022

Executive Summary:

The Violence Reduction Unit's (VRU) budget enables the VRU 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. All of the VRU's existing budget is committed to a range of violence reduction programmes. The 2020/2021 budget includes £7 million awarded by the Home Office for this financial year, to be spent in-year only; therefore, any ongoing commissioned activity funded through this £7m cannot continue past March 2021 until further funding is secured.

The Home Office has not announced funding available to VRUs from April 2021; it is anticipated that the VRU will be informed as late as February 2021. This would not allow sufficient and adequate time to recommission or extend existing contracts. It would also not be beneficial for current providers to end delivery to then be told at the last minute that the VRU would be able to then provide funding.

Careful consideration has been made in assessing and reviewing Home Office current commissioned activity; establishing what activity the VRU would want to continue into a further year of funding (2021/2022) and providing adequate notice to providers of this intention to extend or recommission.

The VRU was allocated £5m of growth funding by the Mayor in 2021/22, of which £0.7m has been committed to date. The VRU is therefore requesting to utilise £0.5m from the uncommitted £4.3m VRU Mayoral growth funding to underpin the bridge-funding 3 months (Q1 April-June) of the below programmes of work. This would be to enable continuation of contracts and delivery and allow time for the Home Office funding decision to be announced to the VRU.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is recommended to:

1. Approve the utilisation of Bridge funding to support continuity of service delivery in relation to the 5 programmes and special staffing support listed below for a period of 3 months from April – June 2021 utilising 2021/2022 VRU growth funding (held in reserves).
2. Further approval is requested for delegation of authority to be given to the VRU director to approve decisions on the utilisation of Home Office funding 2021/22 to support continuity of programme delivery in relation to the 5 programmes and special staffing support up to 31st March 2022, once Home Office funding is confirmed.

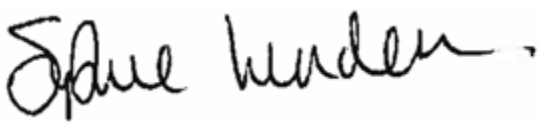
- VRU contributes towards funding A&E and MTC Intervention Contract (held by MOPAC CJC) to the value of £112k, with an intention to fund via Home Office funding until 31 March 2022 once confirmed, with an annual value of £447,063.
- Extension of Bounce Back Foundation grant agreement for the total of £114k, with an intention to fund via Home Office funding until 31 March 2022 once confirmed, with an annual value of £457,000.
- Extension of London Borough of Camden grant agreement for the total of £44k, with an intention to fund via Home Office funding until 31 March 2022 once confirmed, with an annual value of £175,000.
- Extension of ELBA grant agreement for the total of £87.5k, with an intention to fund via Home Office funding until 31 March 2022 once confirmed, with an annual value of £350,000.
- Extension of Hackney CVS grant agreement for the total of £87.5k, with an intention to fund via Home Office funding until 31 March 2022 once confirmed, with an annual value of £350,000.
- Allocate growth funding of £95k towards special staffing support, with an intention to fund via HO until 31 March 2022, with an annual value of £368,341.

3. Approve receipt of any Home Office funding received in respect of financial year 2021/22.

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 **14/12/2020**

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

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Violence Reduction Unit's (VRU) budget enables the VRU 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 impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on children and young people in London has been profound. It has affected young people's mental health and education and has pushed some further into poverty. We already know there is a clear link between deprivation and serious youth violence.
- 1.3 All of the VRU's existing commissioning budget is committed to a range of violence reduction programmes. The 2020/2021 budget includes £7 million awarded by the Home Office for this financial year, to be spent in-year only; therefore, any ongoing commissioned activity funded through this £7m cannot continue past March 2021 until further funding is secured.
- 1.4 The VRU currently utilises the Mayoral annual £5m contribution towards staffing and sustainable approaches for violence reduction by enabling programmes to spread their spend over a multi-year delivery plan. This is in line with a long-term public health approach to violence reduction. This approach has also supported the impact of COVID-19 on some providers as some reprofiling of programmes has had to be made, partially in relation to providers being required to perform different methods of service delivery from original plans.

2. Overview of requests & funding

- 2.1 In section 4 below, *Table 1* provides an overview of recommendations for bridge-funding of continued Home Office commissioned activity in line with MOPAC's Contract Regulations. There is a high likelihood that the VRU will receive Home Office funding for 2021-2022.
- 2.2 Where Home Office funded activity is ending and is not recommended to continue, this is due to programmes / contracts expiring and the VRU not wishing to extend those contracts.

3. Issues for consideration

- 3.1 In April 2020 the Home Office confirmed the allocation of £7m to the VRU, stipulating that full spend must take place by March 2021. To ensure this was fully spent, the VRU worked hard to identify and allocate programmes which would help deliver the strategy for violence reduction. Contracts were executed by June 2020.

- 3.2 The Home Office has not yet announced specific funding available to each of the 18 VRUs from April 2021. However, in recent announcements regarding the government's spending review 2020, indications that funding will continue to be made available to VRUs has been made. It is anticipated that the VRU will be informed as late as February 2021. This would not allow sufficient and adequate time to recommission or extend existing contracts. It would also not be beneficial for current providers to end delivery to then be told at the last minute that the VRU would be able to then provide funding.
- 3.3 Careful consideration has been made in assessing and reviewing Home Office current commissioned activity; establishing what activity the VRU would want to continue into a further year of funding (2021/2022) and providing adequate notice to providers of this intention to extend or recommission.
- 3.4 Any specialist staffing support appointments will be requested via MOPAC's recruitment approvals process.

4. Financial Comments

- 4.1 The VRU currently have £9.1m funding in reserves. This is made up of £4.1m carry-forward from 2020/21 into 2021/22 and £5m Mayoral Growth funding allocated for 2021/2022 and future years.

The £4.1m carry-forward amount is fully committed to fund projects where project delivery timelines have been reprofiled from 2020/21 into 2021/22. Of the £5m Mayoral Growth funding, £0.7m has already been committed for 2021/2022 programmes, with £4.3m remaining and therefore available to fund additional programmes.

The VRU are therefore requesting to utilise £0.5m from the remaining £4.3m Mayoral Growth funding to bridge-fund 3 months (Q1 April-June) of the below programmes of work. This would be to enable continuation of contracts and delivery and allow time for the Home Office funding decision to be announced to the VRU.

- 4.2 This would act to underpin the commitments to extend the programmes. If confirmation of Home Office funding for 2021/22 is received; the funding streams for these programmes would switch to Home Office funding. In the low risk scenario that the Home Office funding is not forthcoming, this will need to be funded from the growth funding.
- 4.3 This is to enable the extension of well-performing, beneficial programmes, rather than cease all Home Office commissioned activity until at least July 2020. This would impact young people receiving violence reduction support as intervention would cease for those young people. Additionally, some VRU employees are also funded via the home office funding therefore notice for plans post April is needed before January 2021.

Table 1: Overview of recommendations for bridge-funding of continued Home Office commissioned activity

Intervention	Budget 2020-21	Recommendation	Bridge-Funding cost	Proposed Budget 2021 – 22*	Proposed Interim Funding Source
A&E intervention (Redthread, Oasis)	£1,100,00	Continue	£111,766	£447,063	2021-2022 VRU Growth funding (held in reserves)
Engage (Camden Council)	£175,000	Continue	£43,750	£175,000	
Divert (Bounce Back)	£457,000	Continue	£114,250	£457,000	
ELBA	£350,000	Continue	£87,500	£350,000	
Hackney CVS	£350,000	Continue	£87,500	£350,000	
Special staffing support	£322,701	Continue	£92,085	£368,341	
	£2,754,200		£536,851	£2,147,404	

*Inclusive of bridge-funding

5. Legal Comments

5.1. 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 bids for grant funding made and all offers made of grant funding; and/or where appropriate a strategy for grant giving.
- 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.

5.2. Officers must ensure that any variations to existing grant agreements are undertaken in accordance with MOPAC's Scheme of Consent and Delegation and Contract Regulations and that appropriate documentation is put in place and executed by MOPAC and funding recipients before any alteration to provision of funding occurs.

6. Commercial Issues

6.1 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 unforeseen variations and extensions to contracts with an original value of £500,000 or

above, when the variation or extension is greater than 10% of the original value and/or is for a period of more than 12 months.

6.2 This is the first variation on these existing VRU grant agreements proposed for the bridge funding (please see section 5.3).

6.3 The grant agreement for Divert and Engage was awarded via direct grant award (detailed in DMPC 736). The grant agreement for Hackney CVS was awarded via direct grant award (detailed in DMPC 673). Please note rationale for bridge funding of continued funding for direct awards have been reviewed.

7. Public Health Approach

7.1 Evidence-based practice is fundamental to the implementation of a public health approach to reducing violence. Therefore, more research including the gather of good practice and 'what works' is required to deepen and broaden the evidence base around violence reduction, diversion and prevention in London. The delivery to date for these programmes still require further support to address the 'what works' question and support ongoing good practise.

7.2 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).

8. GDPR and Data Privacy

8.1 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

9. Equality Comments

9.1 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.

9.2 Initial screening for all programmes has already taken place around equality impact and it was established that a full EQIA was not required.

10. Background/supporting papers

N/A.

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: NA

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

Commercial issues are not applicable

☑

GDPR/Data Privacy

- GDPR compliance issues are covered in the body of the report

☑

Director/Head of Service

The VRU Director 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 14/12/2020