

CEO Decision – CEOD 34-2020

Title: VRU Research - Homicide (Motives and Micropathways)

Executive Summary:

Homicide causes severe harm, personal and societally trauma and requires significant investment of resources to bring offenders to justice and support the trauma suffered by friends and family as well as wider communities. The evidence base for how to prevent homicide is limited and so it is intended to commission in-depth research in order to understand more fully, the motives and risk factors that have been present in homicides, that can then inform preventative opportunities for the future.

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) therefore proposes to fund Behavioural Insights Limited (trading as Behavioural Insights Team) to undertake a piece of research to the cost of up to £97,601 to improve the VRU's understanding of homicides in London.

The research will help the VRU understand the motives behind violent incidents and the events that precede them to inform future interventions.

Recommendation:

The CEO of the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime is recommended to:

- Note the scope of the research proposal.
- Approve the allocation of £97,601 to fund a research piece on homicides in London which is funded from the existing VRU commissioning budget for 20/21.
- Approve the single tender award of the contract to the Behavioural Insights Limited

Chief Executive Officer

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 25/09/2020

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1.1 Homicide is the most high-harm and serious of all offences of violence.
- 1.1.2 The Violence Reduction Unit's (VRU) Strategic Needs Assessment highlighted that most research and evidence relating to violence reduction focuses on the person, or individual drivers and/or factors of violence. There is a large gap in the evidence base relating to situational drivers and influences.
- 1.1.3 The Link to the Strategic Needs Assessment can be found here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/city-hall-blog/new-report-shows-violence-cost-london-ps3-billion-last-year>
- 1.1.4 The Strategic Needs Assessment was conducted by the Behavioural Insights Limited trading as Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) for the VRU, having been awarded through a competitive tendering process in 2019.

2. Issues for Consideration

- 2.1. This new research the VRU is commissioning BIT to undertake will fill a known and significant gap in the evidence base regarding situational factors of violent incidents. The research will explore the motivation and perception of action alternatives in the lead up to homicides.
- 2.2. The Review of Statutory Homicide Reviews, conducted by Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) for the VRU highlighted the limited requirements for a review of homicides which did not arise from intimate partner violence, abuse or neglect of a child or young person under 18, abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, or committed by a person under the care of specialist mental health services in the six months prior to the event. This means there is limited insight and analysis of causal factors for homicide. This proposed research will involve an in-depth analysis of homicides in London in order to improve understanding and provide critical learning for the VRU, Metropolitan Police Service and wider partners and enable specific behavioural and system interventions to be developed.
- 2.3. This research will involve in-depth analysis of homicides through accessing data on the HOLMES database, which is used by all police forces in England and Wales to support the investigation of homicides. Data will be provided through a coding process, to obtain consistent data from investigations. The data will be reviewed by specialist MPS staff and provided as non-personal data to the research team.
- 2.4. The research will require staff to be vetted to a level approved by the MPS and for the provider to have an understanding of policing systems and MPS operating protocols; as well as an in-depth understanding of violence in London. The VRU has looked at all options for resourcing this research. This has included the possibility of the research being conducted entirely by the MPS, however this would require specialist staff to be diverted from supporting active homicide investigation, which is not viable or appropriate. In looking at commissioning a research organisation the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) is uniquely placed to undertake this work. They currently have vetted staff embedded within the MPS and has a further research team who are

vetted to MPS requirement. BIT also have unique knowledge of the strategic picture of violence in London, having researched and compiled the VRU Strategic Needs Assessment. It is the combination of all the factors set out that make BIT uniquely placed to conduct this research.

- 2.5. This research piece will be undertaken collaboratively, with the VRU, the BIT, the MPS, MOPAC and the GLA sitting on a working group. The working group will review the progress of the research and ensure there is synergy with other research being conducted by the represented partners.

3. Financial Comments

- 3.1. The total budget requirement for this work totals £97,601 and will be funded from existing 2020/21 VRU Home Office grant funding.
- 3.2. This budget is reflective of the series of work packages and outputs that will accompany this research product, several of which will include in depth qualitative analysis. It is expected that once commissioned the research project will take six months, greatly dependent on collaboration with the MPS and the unknown impact/restrictions from Covid-19.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1 Paragraph 5 of the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation and Consent provides that the Chief Executive has delegated authority to approve:
 - The procurement strategy for all MOPAC revenue and capital contracts of a total value of between £50,000 and £499,999; and
 - All contract exemptions for MOPAC below £100,000.

5. Commercial Issues

- 5.1 Whilst this is a Single Tender Action and therefore a contract exemption according to the MOPAC Contract Regulations section 2.3.4 (See section 4) and in the MOPAC Scheme of Delegation (See Annex 1), the evidence provided to support this award is satisfactory to justify the decision thus:
 - The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) was part of the Cabinet Office but is now an independent entity. Because of its alignment to the Cabinet Office, BIT has staff who are vetted at various levels, that allow them access to data within the MPS. Their role has also resulted in them having staff currently embedded within the MPS. This gives BIT a unique position to access the level of data that we require for the successful delivery of this project; no other agency has this level of access to key data.
 - Para 2.4 above also sets out the unique understanding that BIT already has on the strategic picture of violence in London. This has been gained through research and production by BIT, of the VRU Strategic Needs Assessment. BIT undertook this initial work through a competitive tendering process.

- Market testing on whether there are other organisations who could do this has delivered no alternatives. We have also liaised with internal MOPAC colleagues such as E&I who are unable to support this or deliver alternative “deep data” at this time.
- The VRU Commercial Manager has ensured that this position has been reached with the input and co-operation of Legal and Governance colleagues.

6. Public Health Approach

- 6.1. Evidence-based practice is fundamental to the implementation of a public health approach. As there is limited known evidence of what works, VRU is committed to contributing to the evidence base.

7. GDPR and Data Privacy

- 7.1. MOPAC will adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and ensure that BIT are fully compliant.
- 7.2. The MPS will extract data from the HOLMES database through a coding process that will exclude personal data and this will then be provided to BIT to conduct the research.
- 7.3. The VRU has conducted a DPIA checklist in relation to this project that confirmed that no further action needs to be undertaken with regards to completing a DPIA.
- 7.4. The VRU will request and retain a copy of data sharing agreements between the Met and BIT.
- 7.5. Reports and findings that include sensitive or personal information will be suitably redacted by the MPS before publication

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.

9. Background/supporting papers

N/A

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 TfL legal team has been consulted on the proposal. (Rachael Scott @ TFL 4 August)	✓
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 and Data Privacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDPR compliance issues are covered in the body of the report and the Data Protection Officer has been consulted on the GDPR issues within this report. • A DPIA is not required. 	✓
Director/Head of Service The Assistant Director of the VRU has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the MOPAC's plans and priorities.	✓