

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 6 September 2022

Subject: Manchester’s approach to achieving the Safety of Women and Girls

Report of: Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

Summary

This report introduces Manchester’s approach for the safety of women and girls in the city.

Recommendations

The Committee are invited to consider and comment on the information contained in this report.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

None

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
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The focus on the safety of women and girls is due to the disproportionate number of women who are victims. The impact of the approach on protected groups has been considered through an Equality Impact Assessment which is attached as appendix 1. to the report.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	This report will highlight how the work to achieve the safety of women and girls in the city with the introduction of a night-time safety charter, a Steering Group and Delivery Plan to contribute towards this and ensuring neighbourhoods are safe and therefore a destination of choice for people to live, visit and work.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

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Background documents (available for public inspection) None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Gender-based violence is an issue that has far-reaching consequences for communities and society, as well as individuals and their families. 80% of women responding to a YouGov survey in 2021 said that they had been sexually harassed in public spaces, that figure rising to 97% of those aged between 18 and 24. Over the last 18 months the issues of women feeling safe in and moving around their communities has become more stark following specific tragic incidents where women have sadly lost their lives.
- 1.2 The Council fully recognises this issue and its impact, and is proud that the city, as the home of the Pankhurst Centre and the Women's Rights movement, has active campaigning and support groups that continue to fight for the safety and protection of women.
- 1.3 Recognising also that there is still much more to be done so that women feel safe to go about all aspects of their lives in the city, the Council passed a resolution at its meeting on 31st March 2021 to do everything it can to build a city free from misogyny and violence against women and girls. A key strand of this commitment was for the city to be awarded the White Ribbon Accreditation which was achieved and launched in March 2022.

2.0 Greater Manchester Response

- 2.1 During the summer of 2021, The Mayor and Deputy Mayor led a consultation with the citizens of Greater Manchester that was completed in August 2021 and which informed the production of the Gender Based Violence Strategy for Greater Manchester. The final version of the Strategy was published on 24th September 2021.

[Gender Based Violence Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
\(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/gender-based-violence-strategy)

- 2.2 The Strategy is informed by 10 key priorities, which in summary are:
 - Working to tackle the attitudes and underlying inequalities that foster gender based violence.
 - Making it as easy as possible for victim and survivors to access the support they need.
 - Maximising accountability to victims and survivors, especially with regard to police and justice outcomes.
 - Ensuring all front line staff understand that anyone can become a victim of gender based violence, and that poverty, economic instability and other inequalities can compound their vulnerability.
 - Anticipating how the threats posed to victims are intensified by online forms of abuse.

- Taking a Whole Housing approach to reducing the risk of homelessness.
- Developing a culture of reflective learning that build on the valuable work of our specialist 'by' and 'for' providers.
- Providing risk assessment tools for all those working with victims and perpetrators and state of the art training in their application.
- Working with employers, professional bodies and government inspectorates to set new professional standards and internal policies for tackling gender based violence and harassment.
- Measuring the effectiveness of interventions and public engagement campaigns, to ensure they increase safety, change attitudes and behaviours, and reduce prevalence.

2.3 The launch of the strategy was accompanied by an impactful video campaign, entitled #IsThisOK which has had over 5million views.

<https://youtu.be/hjZTZm1phwo>

2.4 Delivery of the strategy across GM will be achieved through an action plan, progress with which will be overseen by a newly created Gender Based Violence Board, comprising a broad cross section of representation and co-chaired by the Deputy Mayor.

3.0 Manchester's approach

3.1 Manchester supports the aims and priorities of the GMGBV Strategy but is also keen to ensure that we prioritise the issues that are most prevalent and of most importance to women and girls who live in or visit Manchester. The aim is to ensure that a local action plan for the city is developed which complements the GM-wide plan but also focuses on issues specific to the city. The plan covers short, medium and long term actions.

3.2 A Safety of Women and Girls Steering Group chaired by the Deputy Leader, has been established and will hold its first meeting in September. An action plan will be presented at the first Steering Group meeting for approval. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and approved and is attached at appendix 1.

3.3 Staffing

The recruitment of a Programme Lead for this area has been completed and an officer is now in post. Work is underway to recruit a Victim's Champion Advisor which will contribute to promotion of the Coordinated Community Response model and ensure that victims/survivors are consistently at the heart of service delivery

3.4 Women's Night-time Safety Charter

Work is underway to launch a Women's Night-time Safety Charter in September 2022. Learning has been taken from London who set up a scheme in 2018, and have shared their toolkit and experiences from the last four years. Manchester's approach is similar to the London approach, and work is progressing to develop a dedicated webpage and resources which will be available on the Council and Community Partnership websites. Engagement and discussions with businesses and groups that operate in the evening and night time economy have been positive with many organisations already pledging to sign up to the Charter and help to support making Manchester safer for women and girls.

The Charter will have 7 'pledges' (listed below) which businesses and groups will be asked to commit to. These pledges aim to encourage businesses to consider women's safety in the workplace and what to do if they witness or have an incident reported to them. A full toolkit will be available for organisations that sign up to help them work through the pledges. There will also be a training offer to groups and businesses that pledge their support to the Charter, which is due to be launched at the end of September / early October.

3.5 7 Charter Pledges

- Nominate a champion in your organisation who actively promotes women's night safety.
- Demonstrate to staff and customers that your organisation takes women's safety at night seriously, for example through a communications campaign.
- Remind customers and staff that Manchester is safe, but tell them what to do if they experience harassment when working, going out or travelling.
- Encourage reporting by victims and bystanders as part of your communications campaign.
- Train staff to ensure that all women who report are believed.
- Train staff to ensure that all reports are recorded and responded to.
- Design your public spaces and workplaces to make them safer for women at night.

3.6 The Charter will be launched at an event in September and will encourage more organisations who operate in the night time economy to pledge their support to the Charter and to consider women's safety for those who work or visit the city.

3.7 Women & Girls Reference Group & Voice

It is important to have representation and hear the views of women and girls from different backgrounds, ethnicities, sectors and areas in the city, for them to share their views on how this area is developed and what we can do to make the city safer for all women and girls. A commitment to establish a Women and Girls Reference Group is proposed and this will be progressed over the next few months, while looking at how we engage with women and girls and ensure the

reference group is representative, while not duplicating other groups and work already established across the city and GM.

3.8 Communication and engagement

The GMCA has developed a full two year Communication and Engagement Action Plan which looks to support the GMGBV strategy. Chief aims are to highlight the impact that communications and engagement can have on tackling and challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours by men and boys, and the potential for escalation into more serious incidents. It also seeks to promote how activities are targeted to different communities experiencing specific issues across the city. The Plan was launched at the end of last year with #IsThisOk

The Plan sets out to promote a 'whole system' approach to tackle gender based violence, by changing the story and mobilising Greater Manchester to call out unacceptable behaviour and misogyny that makes women/girls the target. It will ask men/boys to think about their behaviour and how it makes women/girls feel and to inspire and enable everyone to play their part in tackling gender-based violence. This will be done through specific campaigns with a focus on male behaviour and equipping parents with knowledge and support to challenge and seek help about inappropriate and misogynistic behaviours. It will also work with employers to tackle workplace misogyny and mistreatment.

The campaign will also align with and amplify wider and national messages and campaigns. We propose to support the Plan and use our own platforms to amplify the campaign and messages.

Working with GMCA, the universities and with student representation we are supporting the development of the Manchester 'Good Night Out Guide', The initial focus of the guide is students, particularly those new to the city and it proposes to:

- Make people aware of what to do and where to go if they need help on a night out (and after a night out).
- To bring all the provision, resources and guidance into one place (including GMCA, CityCo, City Council, Students Union, Voluntary sector and Policing guidance and resources).
- To provide reassurance to people that safety and welfare at night is taken seriously by all the relevant partners.
- To ensure good quality and consistent night-time welfare provision and to further build on that provision.

Funding from the Deputy Mayor's office has been secured to create a campaign and messages, which is due to be launched in time for the new students in fresher's week in September 2022. The aim is to further develop the guide as a

useful resource for anyone visiting the city to use and help them to plan a safe night out.

3.9 Students

The Universities are members of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), however given Manchester's significant student population there is a separate governance and meeting structure to look at issues that relate to students. The issue of violence against women and girls is a priority area of their work. The Sexual Violence Action Network (SVAN) was established in 2021; this group reports into the Student Safety Group which in turn reports into the CSP.

The SVAN group is a multi-agency partnership including all the universities, GMP, CSP, GMCA, Manchester Student Homes, Victim Services, representation from the Student Unions and student representation. The city-wide action network works to ensure that Manchester has an effective partnership response to sexual violence and harassment of its student population. The group's terms of reference and action plan includes:

- The development of a comprehensive prevention strategy.
- To deliver streamlined and cohesive messages.
- Increase inter-agency knowledge and awareness of internal frameworks within Higher Education Institutes to address these issues.
- Identify opportunities to improve the student-survivor journey.
- Improve data/Information sharing between partners to understand the scope and identify opportunities to improve data collection/analysis/reporting.
- Reducing vulnerability in the night-time economy; increasing support and intervention where students may need it.

A communication campaign is due to be launched in September 2022 to raise sites and student bar venues.

In 2020, the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan and Salford University launched a Student Safety Zone App. The app, which is free to download, directly connects students or staff to the appropriate safety/security team or first responder for that area, who will provide the assistance needed. This is known as the 'Manchester SafeZone Alliance.' This will be promoted to all students to download and use.

All new students receive information and advice on consent as well as details of how to access specialist support within the Universities and externally as part of their induction. GMP and specialist services such as St Mary's are invited onto campus to take part in the welcome week.

3.10 Education

A Greater Manchester programme is being developed and will identify key individuals to lead work as a 'pathfinder' school in each of the 10 districts of GM, we will work to connect this to work that is being undertaken in schools across Manchester. We will also continue to work with colleagues in the Violence Reduction Unit to increase educational interventions offers across the city.

3.11 Spiking and vulnerability

Over the last 12 months as the night time economy has restarted, significant work has been taking place with partners, including the relaunched Pub and Club network, to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place both at venues and in the city centre where many young people, including students new to the city, may be going out to bars and clubs for the first time. Advisory visits have also been taking place to venues to ensure that all staff, including the many new staff who have started since pandemic restrictions were lifted, are familiar with safeguarding protocols and have appropriate measures in place to ensure safety of their customers.

In response to increased concerns by students in spiking cases in October 2021, safety measures were increased in student areas and licensed premises popular with students, including provision of spiking testing kits, personal attack alarms and bottle top protectors for drinks, all of which were handed out at campuses and university sites by staff, while speaking to students to reassure them that these types of issues were infrequent in the city, but to advise them on what to do if they or someone they knew was a victim.

Safeguarding and vulnerability visits have been conducted with a focus on premises popular with new students and younger groups who may be more likely to become vulnerable. Incidents of reported spiking are followed up with a partnership visit to premises that have been named by the alleged victim as many reports are made after the victim has already left the premises and the premises are therefore unaware.

Work is continuing between partners including MCC, Public Health and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) around incidents of alleged spiking of drinks at licensed premises. GMP and the Night-Time Economy Group continue to monitor the number of reported cases and raise the issue at local licensed trade meetings.

GMP has carried out analysis of recorded spiking incidents and will continue to monitor any further incidents. Operation Mantel continues to operate in the city centre, with both high visibility and undercover officers monitoring predatory behaviour and identifying and responding to vulnerable members of the public in areas of the city centre. All reported spiking cases are investigated by CID.

Work continues with GMP Officers and hotels in the city centre as part of Operation MakeSafe, where officers visit hotels to raise awareness with staff

about predatory behaviour, spiking and to carry out test purchases to ensure staff challenge and know how to respond. The aim is for this operation to be extended to include taxis and mini-cabs. The city centre team has improved intelligence sharing with the Sex Offenders Unit and this has led to known sex offenders being identified in the city centre.

The Student Angels volunteers continue to operate at weekends (during university term time) and provide welfare support in student venues and areas. The Village Angels provide a similar welfare offer in the Gay Village area of the city. The Village Angels are privy to the police's Operation Custodian (GMP's dedicated night time economy operation) briefing, which is delivered to police officers and partner agencies and these specifically address spiking incidents.

Public Health has been working with hospital A&E units in the city to look at the procedures in place at A&E for spiking incidents. All victims of a spiking incident subject to a police investigation are offered victim support as part of the routine police process.

Venues continue to be engaged with and monitored by enforcement officers to ensure potentially vulnerable customers are supported by venue staff. Feedback from enforcement officers is that venues are doing this effectively and not simply ejecting/abandoning vulnerable customers.

The LOOH team is also working closely with partners including Student Angels and St John Ambulance who provide on street welfare provision on Friday and Saturday nights. Enforcement staff continue to review appropriate advice and communications as part of ongoing efforts to keep people safe, as well as how to support licensed venues to deal with the matter.

3.12 Ask Angela

The Ask Angela scheme is a national campaign, started in 2016 and is used by bars and other venues to keep people safe from sexual assault by using a codeword 'Ask Angela' to identify when they are in danger or are in an uncomfortable situation. The scheme is voluntary and has had a good uptake in the city and is supported by multiple licensed premises and businesses that operate in the night-time economy. The venues are positive about the scheme and the uptake of posters and promotional goods has been high. However, emphasis put on this scheme will be modest, as it is difficult to monitor the service people receive, while staffing issues and training for the scheme has meant it is not consistently offered in all venues.

3.13 Equality and Diversity

Ongoing work and engagement will continue to ensure the voices of vulnerable and marginalised women, people with disabilities and older women are heard. We will continue to work with men and boys to ensure their engagement informs

part of this approach. The Equality Impact Assessment, attached at appendix 1, will help to inform this work and ensure we continue to consider our approach to marginalised communities.

4.0 White Ribbon Accreditation – Launched

- 4.1 At a ceremony on Tuesday 8th March (International Women’s Day) the city council announced it had been awarded the White Ribbon Accreditation. The White Ribbon campaign is part of a global movement to end men’s violence against women by engaging with men and boys to make a stand against violence. The aim of White Ribbon is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women.
- 4.2 The approach is about changing our culture to prevent violence before it starts and that all men take responsibility for thinking about their own actions to promote equality and respect, and are prepared to call out harassing, sexist and violent behaviour when they see it in others. The accreditation highlights the importance and our commitment to raise awareness of the White Ribbon initiative and promote engagement and involvement with it across the council and with our partners.
- 4.3 There are four themes and an action plan has been developed around these
- Strategic Leadership
 - Engaging Men and Boys
 - Changing Culture
 - Raising awareness
- 4.4 Work has already commenced with some actions completed. White Ribbon Ambassadors have been nominated for each Directorate along with the Statutory Deputy Leader.
- 4.5 The first meeting of the Ambassadors took place at the end of July to discuss ideas and ways to support directorates in raising awareness, promoting the messages and signing up more Champions from each directorate.
- 4.6 Ongoing oversight of progress towards implementation of the Action Plan will be provided by the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

5.0 Governance

- 5.1 Work is underway to establish a steering group for the safety of women and girls work which will draw together a range of service and strategic leads from across the council, this will include: a representative from GMP, Education, Communications, Planning, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion, Human Resources and Organisation Development, Licensing, the Domestic violence

partnership board, the Serious Violence Board, the GMCA and a representative from the Universities. The steering group will be responsible for delivery of this action plan. The first meeting is scheduled for September.

- 5.2 The safety of women and girls' cross cuts across other themes, such as domestic violence and abuse, serious violence, night time economy, sex work, student safety and the White Ribbon accreditation in the city. These themes already have governance arrangements in place which the safety of women and girls steering group will link in with to avoid duplication at both a local and Greater Manchester level, with CSP representation sitting on the GMGBV board and executive group.
- 5.3 The safety of women and girls steering group will report to the CSP Board and will engage with the Reference Group to ensure we hear the voice of women from diverse and different areas of the city.