

MDA No.	1	2	1	6
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Title: Letter to Secretary of State for Justice – Rape and Sexual Offences Cases

Executive Summary

At the Police and Crime Committee meeting on 16 September 2020, the Committee resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, to agree any outputs arising from the meeting.

Following consultation with the Deputy Chairman, party Group Lead members and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, the Chair of the Committee, Unmesh Desai AM, agreed the Committee's letter to the Secretary of State for Justice.

The letter will be formally noted at the Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Decision

That the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chairman, party Group Lead Members and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, agree the Committee's letter to the Secretary of State for Justice on rape and sexual offences cases, attached at **Appendix 1**.

Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature

Date 17/11/20



Printed Name Unmesh Desai AM (Chair, Police and Crime Committee)

Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Notes:

- 1. *The Lead Officer should prepare this form for signature by relevant Members of the Assembly to record any instance where the Member proposes to take action under a specific delegated authority. The purpose of the form is to record the advice received from officers, and the decision made.*
- 2. **The 'background' section (below) should be used to include an indication as to whether the information contained in / referred to in this Form should be considered as exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). If so, the specimen Annexe (attached below) should be used. If this form does deal with exempt information, you must submit both parts of this form for approval together.**

Background and proposed next steps:

At the Police and Crime Committee meeting on 16 September 2020, the Committee resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, to agree any outputs arising from the meeting.

Following consultation with the Deputy Chairman, party Group Lead members and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, the Chair of the Committee, Unmesh Desai AM, agreed the Committee's letter to the Secretary of State for Justice. Attached at **Appendix 1**.

The letter will be formally noted at the Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision

Signed by Committee Services	L J Harvey	Date	26/10/2020
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Print Name: Lauren Harvey	Tel:	x4383
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Financial implications NOT REQUIRED

NOTE: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signed by Finance	Date
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Print Name	Tel:
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Legal implications

The Police and Crime Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signed by Legal		Date	27/10/20
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Print Name	Emma Strain, Monitoring Officer	Tel:	X 4399
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Supporting detail/List of Consultees:

Steve O'Connell AM
Sian Berry AM
Peter Whittle AM
Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

Public Access to Information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? No

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form - No

Lead Officer/Author

Signed	J Roker	Date 26/10/20
Print Name	Janette Roker	Tel: x6562
Job Title	Senior Policy Adviser	
Countersigned by Executive Director	<i>E. Williams</i>	Date 26/10/2020
Print Name	Ed Williams	Tel: X4399

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Unmesh Desai AM
Chair of the Police and Crime Committee

Rt Hon. Robert Buckland QC MP

Secretary of State

Ministry of Justice

102 Petty France

London

SW1A 9AJ

(Sent by email)

23 October 2020

Rape and sexual assault

Thank you for your response to my letter, sent on behalf of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, regarding the growing backlog of criminal cases waiting to be dealt with in the Crown Court.

While it is encouraging to hear that cases have kept flowing through the courts during COVID-19, and that greater capacity for the justice system through additional courts and tribunals will enable more hearings and swifter delivery of justice, we remain extremely concerned about the capacity of the courts and the number of cases dropping out of the system.

In September, the Police and Crime Committee met with the Metropolitan Police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and Victims Commissioner for London to explore rape and sexual offences in the capital. The Committee heard how there has been an

increase in the time taken for cases to be charged by the police and CPS, and that rape prosecutions have fallen to their lowest level since records began, despite rising reports of rape. While fewer rape cases are being passed from police to prosecutors, the fall in the number of rape cases prosecuted by the CPS is even more marked. In addition, the average time for a report of rape to be charged is the longest of any crime type.

At the meeting, we also heard how a lack of perspex screens in courts is causing further delays to rape trials. This is of great concern; the Victims Commissioner for London told us that one rape survivor, who had waited over two years to get to court, is now faced with further delay as the courts have not been set up with perspex screens. This is unacceptable and likely to have a damaging effect on victims' confidence and willingness to stay in the system. I urge you to take swift action, and let us know what steps you are taking, to ensure that this issue is dealt with promptly to avoid a further build up of cases and issues of capacity in the system.

In addition, it has recently been reported that evidence lost by the police is increasing the likelihood of collapsed trials, including rape cases. The Committee would welcome further information on how you are working with partners in the criminal justice system to mitigate the impact of lost evidence and working together to prevent the potential for trials to collapse.

We would be grateful to receive a response to the issues raised in this letter by 20 November 2020.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Unmesh Desai". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

Unmesh Desai AM
Chair of the Police and Crime Committee

Cc: Kit Malthouse MP, Minister for Crime and Policing