

# MDA No.: 1304

## Title: Counter-terrorism

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Police and Crime Committee meeting on 7 July 2021, the Committee held a question and answer session on counter-terrorism in London and resolved that:

*Authority be delegated to the Chairman, in consultation with the Deputy Chairman and party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the discussion.*

- 1.2 Following consultation with the Deputy Chairman and party Group Lead Members, the Chairman is asked to agree the letter to the Mayor, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

### 2. Decision

- 3.1 **That the Police and Crime Committee's letter to the Mayor on counter-terrorism be agreed.**

#### 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:**

**Printed Name:** Shaun Bailey AM, Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee

**Date:** 12/08/2021

### 3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

#### Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The exercise of delegated authority agreeing the Committee's letter to the Mayor will be formally noted at the Committee's next appropriate meeting.

#### Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services): L. Harvey

Printed Name: Lauren Harvey, Senior Committee Officer

Date: 11/08/2021

Telephone Number: 020 7983 4383

#### Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

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

Signature (Finance): Not Required


Printed Name: N/A

Date: N/A

Telephone Number: N/A

#### Legal Implications:

The Chair of the London Assembly has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal): 

Printed Name: Emma Strain, Monitoring Officer

Date: 11/08/2021

Telephone Number: 020 7983 6550

#### Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

- Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman)
- Unmesh Desai AM
- Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
- Caroline Russell AM

#### **4. Public Access to Information**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 **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

If yes, until what date:

##### **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

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#### **Lead Officer / Author**

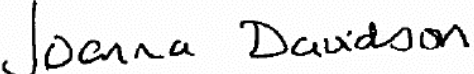
Printed Name: Philippa Goffe

Job Title: Senior Policy Adviser

Date: 11/08/2021

Telephone Number: 07729 625453

#### **Countersigned by Executive Director:**

Signature: 

Printed Name: Joanna Davidson, Interim Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 11.08.2021

Telephone Number: 07813 796175

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# LONDON ASSEMBLY



**Shaun Bailey AM**  
**Chair of the Police and Crime Committee**

Sadiq Khan  
Mayor of London  
Greater London Authority  
(Sent by email)

11 August 2021

Dear Sadiq,

## **Countering terrorism in London**

The Police and Crime Committee has been investigating London's preparedness for future terrorist attacks, including MOPAC's and the Met's approach to countering terrorism.

The Committee's investigation centred on its meeting on 7 July 2021, which marked the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic terrorist attacks in London. At the meeting, we heard from Commander Richard Smith, Head of the Met's Counter-Terrorism Command; Kenny Bowie, MOPAC's Director of Strategy; Oliver Levinson, MOPAC's Head of the Countering Violent Extremism programme; and Robin Merrett, MOPAC's Head of Operational Oversight. Their evidence to the Committee has informed the findings and recommendations contained in this letter.

### *Prevent*

The Committee heard about the successes and challenges associated with London's contribution to the *Prevent* programme. Whilst recognising the significant role the programme had played in transforming young people's lives, MOPAC conceded that awareness of the programme is not as high as it should be and that trust and engagement with local communities is critical to build confidence in the programme. It was noted that referral rates to *Prevent* from friends and family only

accounted for approximately 2 per cent of all referrals to the programme.<sup>1</sup> The Committee also heard that the way in which the programme was structured – in local authority areas with arbitrary administrative boundaries that do not reflect the nature and scope of the threat – presented challenges to its success.

The Committee welcomes MOPAC's recognition of the inadequacies and challenges facing *Prevent* and the steps it has taken to contribute to the wider review of the programme at a national level. The Committee hopes to see a refreshed *Prevent* programme that builds on its achievements in countering terrorism but which learns from the issues that have arisen over recent years. The Committee is particularly keen to see the proportion of referrals from friends and family members to the programme increase. **The Committee recommends that the Mayor writes to the Government to request increased investment in communications within the Prevent programme budget with the aim of increasing referrals from friends and families of at risk individuals.**

#### *Enabling Londoners to play their part in countering terrorism*

Enabling Londoners to support statutory services in identifying suspected terrorists is vital to London's success in countering terrorism. The Committee welcomes the action MOPAC and the Met have taken to encourage Londoners to report suspected activity, such as through social media campaigns and the development of targeted apps. However, the Committee is concerned that specific initiatives, such as the *iREPORTit* app, may not have the funding guaranteed to ensure their sustainability and impact over the longer term.

Whilst recognising the need to maintain a level of operational confidentiality, the Committee believes it is important that Londoners can see the performance and impact of initiatives designed to counter terrorism in the capital. The Committee was pleased to hear about the increase in referrals during the 3 month pilot of the *iREPORTit* app. This needs to be followed up with a full evaluation of the *iREPORTit* app, in order to understand the impact of referrals through the app on subsequent investigations, arrests and convictions of terrorists. The Committee requests sight of the review of the pilot, when it is available.

#### *Rise of online extremism since COVID-19*

It has been widely reported that COVID-19 has exacerbated the threats posed to countering extremism and terrorism in London. Children and young people have been increasingly exposed to extremist material online during lockdown, and at our 7 July meeting, the Committee heard that there has been a decline in terrorism-related arrests and referrals to *Prevent*.<sup>2</sup> This decline is considered to be primarily due to schools and colleges being closed for long periods, with children and young people out of contact with those who would normally be able to spot and refer those of concern.

The Committee heard the Met's concerns about the risks posed by technology companies' desire to move towards end-to-end encryption, which makes it difficult and sometimes impossible for authorities to track and intercept terrorists through communication channels. At the Committee's 7

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<sup>1</sup> London Assembly, [Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 7 July 2021

<sup>2</sup> London Assembly, [Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 7 July 2021

July meeting, Commander Smith said he was “*extremely concerned about the direction of travel*” regarding end-to-end encryption, and indicated that the move would permit “*a dark space*” where “*terrorists can operate with impunity*”.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst recognising the fundamental right to privacy, the Committee believes more needs to be done to challenge the trajectory within technology companies of further encryption. The Mayor has a unique role in convening partners around shared priorities. **The Committee recommends that the Mayor uses this function to engage technology partners in a roundtable conversation about online extremism and terrorism threats.** The roundtable event should include discussions about how authorities, such as the Met, and technology companies can work together both to reduce the risks of online radicalisation of children and young people and to better identify and remove suspected terrorist and extremist activity online.

#### *Additional requests*

The Committee questioned MOPAC on the take-up of counter terrorism e-learning during the Euro 2020 tournament. MOPAC agreed to share data on the take-up during the tournament period. We would be grateful if you could please provide data on the take-up of this online training.

The Committee requests an update on the recommendations made in the first Harris Review, detailing those not actioned and why.

The Committee is concerned about the availability of updates on meetings of the London Contest Board. Can you please confirm when the Board met during 2020 and to date in 2021 and ensure the minutes are published on the website.

#### *Police and Crime Plan*

The Committee is acutely aware that, with a new Mayoral term, you are developing a revised Police and Crime Plan for the coming three years. It is crucial that the Plan reflects the current scope and nature of the threats posed by extremism, radicalisation and terrorism to Londoners. **The Committee recommends that the Plan should:**

- **be updated to include improvements from the Government’s review of the Prevent programme when these are available; and**
- **include actions to engage with and promote referrals from friends and families of at risk children and young people, especially via the *iREPORTit* app, because those who are the closest to young people are the best placed to understand when their behaviour is out of the ordinary.**

The Committee also heard about the emerging findings from the Fishmongers Hall inquests and those from the Manchester Arena Inquiry. **The Committee recommends that these findings are reflected and incorporated in the new Police and Crime Plan.**

The Committee looks forward to engaging with the draft Police and Crime Plan when it is shared for consultation in the coming months.

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<sup>3</sup> London Assembly, [Police and Crime Committee meeting](#), 7 July 2021

We would be grateful if you could please respond to the Committee's recommendations and requests **by 8 September 2021**. Your response to these recommendations should be copied to Janette Roker and Philippa Goffe, the Committee's Senior Policy Advisers ([janette.roker@london.gov.uk](mailto:janette.roker@london.gov.uk)) ([philippa.goffe@london.gov.uk](mailto:philippa.goffe@london.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Bailey', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Shaun Bailey AM**  
**Chair of the Police and Crime Committee**