

Shaun Bailey AM
Chair of Police and Crime Committee
London Assembly

26th May 2021

Dear Mr Bailey, Chair of the Police and Crime Committee,

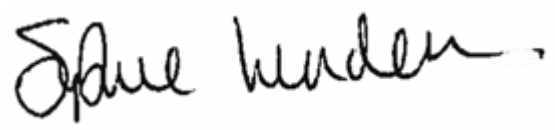
Confirmation Hearing for role of Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Thank you for your letter inviting me to attend the confirmation hearing for the position of Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime on Wednesday 26th May at 11.30am.

I can confirm that I am happy to waive my right to one week's notice for the confirmation hearing to take place.

Please find enclosed all my supporting documentation for this position.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sophie Linden", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Sophie Linden

Supporting statement - Confirmation Hearing for role of Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

Introduction and ethos

Serving as London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime since 2016 has been a privilege, and it is an honour to have been nominated to be re-appointed by the Mayor of London to this vital position. Having worked constructively and collaboratively with the Assembly for five years, I am seeking confirmation of my re-appointment so that we can continue to work to improve the safety of Londoners through effective policing, tackling violence, improving justice for victims and providing vital services to Londoners.

Safety is a fundamental building block to achieving social justice. I know that if people do not feel safe in their homes or on the streets, at work or in their leisure time they will struggle to thrive and in turn our communities will struggle will not be as strong as they should be. This has been a guiding principle and driving force throughout my career. As we start to build London back and recover from the pandemic, this is more important than ever.

I have lived in Hackney since I was 16. Through my time at Hackney Council, within national Government and as Deputy Mayor, I have seen first-hand the horrendous effects of crime. I have met with bereaved families who have lost their loved ones to violent crime. I have spoken with victims of domestic and sexual violence, and I have met with communities where murders have just taken place.

I am committed and passionate about tackling crime in London. We must ensure that families are safe and that individuals thrive, that the police are effective, fair, accountable and transparent in their actions and that there are excellent services for victims when they need them.

Time as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

The past five years have been incredibly tough for Londoners. The impact of nearly a decade of Government austerity has led to rising violent crime across the country, London has witnessed a series of terrorist attacks and rising extremism, and the pandemic has brought with it new and difficult challenges.

As London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, I have worked to respond to the challenges of the last five years and to tackle crime and its causes. I remain grateful to our hard-working police force, they are the best police service in the world and our officers face daily dangers to keep us safe. Over the last year the MPS has had to adapt to policing in a pandemic which has placed pressure and strain on them in ways we couldn't have imagined at the beginning of the Mayoral term.

I'm proud that during the Mayor's first term he has invested record amounts in policing and delivered on his promise of restoring real neighbourhood policing with a minimum of two Dedicated Ward Officers and one PCSO allocated to every ward in the city. The direct investment from the Mayor has also delivered 1,300 extra officers than would otherwise have been affordable, the launch of the City Hall-funded MPS Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF) and the allocation of additional youth workers in accident and emergencies.

We have produced and delivered a Police and Crime Plan which looked at the key, overarching challenges to keeping Londoners safe and aimed to put the victim at the heart of everything we do.

We've also taken vital steps to strengthen trust, confidence and accountability in the police, with largest roll-out of body-worn video in the country, redoubling our efforts to increase diversity in the Met's workforce, conducting a full review of the Met's Gangs Violence Matrix and worked with London's Black communities to develop a far-reaching Action Plan to improve Transparency, Trust and Accountability. The publication of this important Action Plan is only the beginning, as we seek to implement long lasting and meaningful change.

To bear down on violent crime, we have implemented city-wide efforts to keep children and young people safe. We have built upon the knife crime strategy and set up England's first Violence Reduction Unit to tackle the long-term causes of violence. The Mayor's investment has funded the Violent Crime Taskforce and the Rescue and Response programme to respond to county lines offending and victimisation. We have also funded specialist youth workers in A&E departments to intervene at a teachable moment for young people caught up in violent crime.

In 2018 we launched our Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, backed by a record investment to take a holistic approach to tackling VAWG which focuses on prevention, taking action against perpetrators and improving support for victims. We also invested £7 million from the Mayor's VAWG fund to services for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. During the pandemic, we also acted swiftly and decisively to provide additional funding to provide emergency accommodation for Londoners and their children to flee from violence and abuse, helping over 200 victims and families in need.

We have invested record amounts to stand up against hate, tolerance and extremism, including the most comprehensive city-wide engagement exercise in this area ever which led to the publication of the Countering Violent Extremism Programme Report. This was backed up by the joint MOPAC / Google.org Shared Endeavour Fund which provided grassroots organisations working to prevent extremism within London's communities with necessary funding. We also

commissioned Lord Harris to produce the Review into London's Preparedness to Respond to a Major Terrorist Incident.

While we are not complacent, some of the key indicators of violent crimes are down, including knife crimes with injury against under-25s, moped enabled crime and gun crime. We must continue to bear down on all forms of crime, whilst working collaboratively with the Violence Reduction Unit and rest of City Hall - but also the Assembly and other partners - to address its causes.

Educational, professional and political background:

Before I became London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, I was a councillor in Hackney from 2006, and later became Deputy Mayor of the Borough where I had lead responsibility for crime and community safety, neighbourhood and civic engagement. During my time at Hackney I led the council to achieve an 'excellent' rating on the Equality Framework for Local Government, and in 2016 it was named 'Council of the last 20 years' by the Local Government Chronicle (LGC).

One of my proudest achievements during my time at Hackney Council was in 2014, when our ground-breaking gangs unit was awarded the LGC editor's award for Public Partnership working. The unit, which brought together police, probation officers, youth services, local voluntary organisations and representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions to steer young people away from gang involvement whilst enforcing the law, coincided with large falls in recorded gun-related and knife injury crimes. Many of the young people involved also went on to further education and training.

Prior to my time at Hackney, I held roles in the private and voluntary sector, including being Policy and Campaign Manager for the End Child Poverty Campaign. I was also a member of the Local Government Association (LGA) Safer Communities Board and was a peer reviewer for the LGA on community safety. I was also a member of the HMIC advisory board on PEEL inspections.

My time in national Government was spent as a Special Advisor to David Blunkett. When he was Home Secretary, I focused on policing, crime and tackling anti-social behaviour. I developed policy on police reform and neighbourhood policing, as well as reducing the harm caused by illegal drugs. I was also an advisor in the Department for Education with a focus on early years.

The experience of these roles has given me a deep-rooted understanding of how to deliver and the need for real partnerships between the police, communities and the organisations that contribute to the safety and well-being of Londoners. This is something I have demonstrated during my time as DMPC, for example, with the

development of the Action Plan which seeks to overhaul community monitoring structures.

The future

The Mayor's vision for his second term is clear. He will lead from the front in shaping London's recovery from the pandemic and build a greener, fairer, safer and more prosperous city. You cannot hope to achieve this without the fundamental building blocks of safe streets and communities.

We will continue to invest in the police to ensure that they have the resources they need, and our young people are given opportunities to unlock their potential and steer them away from crime. We will renew our focus on the safety of women and girls, whilst working hand in hand across City Hall to address the causes of crime, tackle the behaviours of perpetrators and support the victims of crime.

We will also continue to tackle the prevalence of gun, knife and gang crime in our communities, whilst working to prevent the spread of extremism, promote integration, protect Londoners from the threat of terrorism while improving the city's preparedness with a refresh of the Lord Harris Review.

One of the key roles of the DMPC is to hold the MPS to account and employ measures to make it more accountable and transparent. I will continue to do this without fear, whilst supporting our police officers who work incredibly hard under unimaginably difficult circumstances, and backing them when they have to take difficult decisions.

I recognise the importance of the role of the Assembly in holding both myself, the Mayor and the police service to account. The engagement I have had with the Assembly during my time as DMPC has provided both me and the Mayor with vital scrutiny and challenge. We made a choice to work collaboratively and constructively together with you, and it is in that vein I intend to continue.

Sophie Linden

2016 - 2021 Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime

- In 2016 the Mayor in his MOPAC role appointed me as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC), to whom he delegated all functions that are not reserved to him. As DMPC, I lead MOPAC and am accountable to the Mayor for:
 - the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan – providing strategic direction, leading engagement with Londoners and stakeholders.
 - for ensuring oversight of the police – leading day-to-day oversight, accountability and transparency activities, prioritising key issues for oversight, scrutinising and signing major decisions relating to policing.
 - driving effective criminal justice and crime reduction services across London – ensuring MOPAC supports vital services for crime reduction and supporting victims of crime in London, in line with the Police and Crime Plan and other pressing needs, high level engagement with partner agencies and oversight over delivery.
- Provide expertise on commissioning, community engagement, professional standards and police complaints, governance, finance and audit.
- Work with cross-City Hall teams to communicate Mayoral priorities to Londoners through the development and execution of statistics and research, policy and communications.

2008 - 2016 Deputy Mayor, London Borough of Hackney, Cabinet Member, London Borough of Hackney (elected a councillor in 2006)

- Strategic responsibility for budget setting and delivery of services on crime, youth justice, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour, HR and OD, equalities, licensing, troubled families and community engagement.
- Performance management across the council, the management of partnership working, community engagement and resident participation.
- Strategic responsibility across the council for the corporate strategy, equalities and inclusion.
- Promoted to Deputy Mayor of inner London council that is regarded as outstanding in local government and has won council of the last 20 years.
- Gangs unit achieved Local Government excellence award for partnership working and rolled out across the Met police.
- Member of the HMIC advisory board for PEEL inspections.

2006 - 2008 Director of Public affairs, Bell Pottinger

- Leading and managing teams working with clients on thought leadership, reputation and public affairs.
- Responsibility for developing new business, writing proposals and leading pitches. Managed budgets and teams.

2005 - 2006 Policy and Campaign manager for the End Child Poverty Campaign

- Working with a coalition of children's charities, trade unions and the public sector.
- Senior responsibility for developing policy coalitions for a child poverty

manifesto to influence national policy.

- Developed projects bringing together different groups to influence government and raise awareness of child poverty.
- Published a book of poetry on poverty written by children from schools across the country through working with Shelter and individual schools.

2001 - 2004 Special Adviser to the Home Secretary, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP

- Strategic policy responsibility for crime, anti-social behaviour and drugs policy. Worked on police reform and police pay and conditions – working with and alongside Chief Constables and the senior management of the Metropolitan Police.
- Worked on setting up the anti-social behaviour unit within the Home Office and developing its reach out from Whitehall and into the community and local authorities.
- Stakeholder management internally within parliament and externally with key organisations.

1997-2001 Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP

- Strategic policy development including the first national childcare policy.
- Political strategy for legislation and policy through building coalitions of support for example for new Sex and Relationships guidance for schools.
- Stakeholder management.

1992 - 1997 Researcher to David Blunkett MP

- Health and education policy development including the National Literacy Strategy and the setting up of homework clubs in Premier League Football clubs.
- The development of the Millennium Volunteering programme for young people.

Education

St Gregory's, Bath: 10 O Levels.

Our Lady's Convent, Hackney: 3 A Levels (English, History, French).

2:1 Social and Political Sciences, Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

The Work of MOPAC – 2016-2021

The Mayor is responsible for setting the strategic direction for policing in London; agreeing the annual police budget; overseeing the performance of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) on behalf of Londoners; appointing the Commissioner with the Home Secretary; and commissioning key crime reduction projects and services for victims of crime.

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) supports the Mayor in delivering these responsibilities, providing specialist expertise on commissioning, community engagement, professional standards and police complaints, governance and oversight, finance, audit, statistics and research, and policy and communications. The Mayor can appoint a Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, to whom the Mayor can delegate many of their powers. Sophie Linden was appointed as London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime in 2016 and has served in the post until the end of the Mayor's term in 2021.

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) builds on existing partnerships to bring together specialists to work together to reduce violence in the capital by taking a public health approach.

2016

Following the election of Mayor Sadiq Khan in May 2016 and the confirmation of Sophie Linden as DMPC, MOPAC moved quickly to begin delivery of the Mayor's pledges to Londoners. 2016 saw the commencement of plans to **increase the strength of Dedicated Ward police teams**, from a minimum of one PC and one PCSO to two PCs and one PCSO in every Ward in the city.

Recognising the increase in knife crime in London over the preceding two years and the urgent need for action, the Mayor and DMPC convened the **London Knife Crime Summit**, bringing together young Londoners, community Leaders, police and partner organisations to discuss the growing problem and develop new solutions.

Lord Harris was commissioned to produce an independent **Review into London's Preparedness to Respond to a Major Terrorist Incident**, which put forward a series of recommendations to agencies in London and nationally.

In the aftermath of the **referendum vote to leave the European Union** in June 2016, MOPAC stepped up its oversight of hate crime offences and worked with the MPS, partner agencies and specialist organisations to ensure that the resulting increase in hate crimes was addressed and that victims had access to the support they needed.

Moving forward with the Mayor's pledge to put victims at the heart of the justice service, MOPAC launched a **pan-London Restorative Justice service** and a new **online live chat support service for victims of crime**.

In response to a highly critical HMIC report that exposed significant failings in the way the MPS had protected children in London, the Mayor and DMPC led a programme of **action to strengthen oversight and drive improvement in the MPS' work on child protection**. This included the creation of a new independent group of child protection experts and academics, chaired by the DMPC to drive the change necessary, and the **scrapping of the MOPAC 7 crime targets** which were strongly criticised by the HMIC as having led to a greater focus on reducing certain neighbourhood crimes than upon child protection.

In December 2016, MOPAC **put up for sale the three water cannon purchased by the previous Mayor**. The water cannon were not approved by the Home Secretary and could not be used, resulting in thousands of pounds of storage costs for the redundant vehicles.

2017

Following the largest consultation ever conducted by a Mayor into Londoners' priorities for policing and safety, in March 2017 **the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan for London was published**. The Plan set out five key priorities – a better police service for London, a better justice service for London, keeping children and young people safe, tackling violence against women and girls and standing together against hatred, intolerance and extremism. A new performance and oversight framework supported the plan, through which **local policing priorities based on the greatest concerns of communities would be agreed for each Borough in consultation with local elected representatives and police leaders**, replacing the arbitrary reduction targets set for Boroughs by the previous administration, whether they were issues of concern to local residents or not. These local priorities sat alongside mandatory priorities for all areas on the crimes that cause the highest harm to Londoners, ensuring that the lessons of the 2016 HMIC review into child protection were learned and acted on.

Following the retirement of Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, **Cressida Dick was appointed as Commissioner of the MPS** following a rigorous recruitment process. Cressida is the first woman ever to serve as Commissioner.

2017 saw a series of appalling tragedies in London, with terror attacks at Westminster Bridge, London Bridge, Finsbury Park and Parson's Green; and the horrific fire at Grenfell Tower. The Mayor, DMPC and MOPAC were at the heart of the response, standing in solidarity with Londoners, ensuring the police and partners had the resources they needed at a time of extraordinary demand and stepping up specialist services for victims of these dreadful incidents.

Efforts to tackle hatred, intolerance and extremism in London progressed through 2017, with the launch of the Mayor's **Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Programme** to engage with statutory agencies, the private sector, voluntary groups and communities in the fight against radicalisation.

Concerted action against knife crime and violence continued in 2017, with the publication of the **Knife Crime Strategy**, a **Knife Crime Education Summit**, the launch of the **London**

Needs You Alive anti-knife crime campaign and new **work with YouTube to remove content which incites violence**.

June 2017 saw the **appointment of Claire Waxman as London's first independent Victims' Commissioner**, ensuring that the voice of victims is heard in everything we do and driving improvement across the justice service. Building on the growing portfolio of work to improve support for victims of crime in London, MOPAC announced the launch of the **VAWG Grassroots Fund** to support small specialist services for victims, and the launch of the **Online Hate Crime Hub** to support those victimised over the internet and social media.

The Mayor and DMPC intensively **lobbied for increased Government police funding** throughout 2017 as the Government's austerity measures continued to erode police strength and the ecosystem of vital services with a role to play in preventing crime in London. To protect the front line as much as possible in the face of austerity cuts, the Mayor took the difficult decision to **increase the police share of council tax by the maximum amount** permissible in law and launched a Public Access Strategy which reprioritised money spent on maintaining a number of decreasingly-used police front counters into front line policing.

2018

Efforts to crack down on violent crime and its causes intensified in 2018, and the Mayor, DMPC, Commissioner and Home Secretary hosted a **summit of London political** leaders to galvanise cross-city efforts to tackle the appalling damage done. Enforcement against violent criminals was boosted with the launch of the **City Hall-funded MPS Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF)**. Our interventions with young people caught up in violence were strengthened with new funding to allocate more youth workers to hospital emergency departments.

2018 saw a determined focus on violence prevention. The **Young Londoners Fund** was launched to support positive projects and activities around the city for young people – with additional funds for youth projects coming from the successful sale of the water cannon. Plans for **England's first Violence Reduction Unit** were announced to lead long-term efforts to address the complex causes of crime.

Following a spate of moped-enabled crimes in London, City Hall hosted a **Summit with Motorcycle Manufacturers** to encourage further efforts to make mopeds and motorcycles more difficult to steal. In concert with determined police enforcement action and partnership work with local authorities, moped crime was ultimately driven down across the city.

City Hall investment in the MPS continued to increase through maximising the police share of council tax and by moving additional money from business rates to the MPS. The MPS continued its transformation in the face of austerity, moving to a new **BCU Model** across the city.

In a year in which London saw another attempted terror attack at Palace of Westminster, a major new investment to purchase the Empress State Building as a base for a new **Counter Terror Hub** for London was announced.

In March 2018 the Mayor published his **VAWG Strategy for London**, following extensive consultation with Londoners and VAWG organisations and backed with £44m investment. The Strategy set out an ambitious agenda for preventing VAWG, bringing perpetrators to justice and supporting victims and survivors. The London **Women's Safety at Night Charter** was launched, and the Mayor **launched a Judicial Review against the release of serial rapist John Worboys**, a decision that was ultimately reversed. England's first child house – **the Lighthouse** – was opened in London to provide young victims of sexual abuse and exploitation with specialist medical, emotional and investigative support all in one single, child-friendly setting.

MOPAC continued to use its oversight powers to ensure that the interests of Londoners were reflected in policing practice. In December 2018, a ground-breaking **review of the MPS Gangs Violence Matrix** was published, which recommended a comprehensive overhaul of the database to restore trust in its use and ensure it is used both lawfully and proportionately. More than 1,000 young Black Londoners with little or no evidence of a link to criminal gangs have subsequently been removed from the Gang Violence Matrix as a result of the review while its detection rate has improved with the proportion of those from the Matrix in custody increasing by just over a quarter. In 2018 the London Policing Ethics Panel also launched an **investigation into the use of Live Facial Recognition** by the MPS, delivering recommendations to ensure that this new technology would be used in a proportionate, transparent and fair way.

MOPAC continued to innovate in order to deliver better services for Londoners. The new **London Crime Prevention Fund Co-Commissioning Fund** provided £10m to support projects working in multiple Boroughs, tackling issues including County Lines gangs and female reoffending. A ground-breaking **Justice Devolution agreement** between MOPAC, London Councils and the Ministry of Justice paved the way for more joint working to tackle the key issues facing the justice service in London and ultimately give more influence and accountability for Londoners.

2019

Tackling violence and its causes remained the core priority in 2019. **The Violence Reduction Unit began work** under the leadership of Lib Peck, investing £4.7m in its **school exclusion programme** and providing **further funding for youth workers for A&Es**.

The Mayor launched a **new partnership with the Premier League** to provide opportunities for more young Londoners to enjoy free football sessions and interact in a positive environment with other young people from different London communities.

As part of MOPAC's commitment to engaging young Londoners in its work, the latest London **Youth Voice Survey** was published. Nearly 8,000 young Londoners aged 11-16 took part in the Survey, which revealed that while the majority (74%) felt safe in London, more than a quarter of respondents (26%) knew someone who had carried a knife. Later in the year, MOPAC published the findings of **pioneering research into County Lines gangs**. The study revealed that 4,000 young people – some as young as 11 - were involved in lines operating in 41 counties across the UK. In its first year alone, the City Hall-funded **Rescue**

and Response Service worked with 568 vulnerable young people being exploited by County Lines gangs.

MOPAC continued to innovate as part of the fight against violence. A new pilot project using **GPS tags to monitor knife crime offenders** was launched in 20 Boroughs to improve rehabilitation, to act as a deterrent from further offending and to support the MPS and probation services in enforcing restrictions. New investment from MOPAC and the VRU supported the launch of a new **Prison Pathfinder** pilot in HMP Isis. The two-year programme will work with nearly 900 offenders and will include an increased police presence to tackle violence in prison and targeted interventions to support mental health, relationships and build employment skills.

London was again united in the face of an appalling terror attack at Fishmongers Hall in November 2019, in which five people were stabbed, two fatally. Efforts to tackle the radicalisation of vulnerable people by extremists made further progress with the publication of the **Countering Violent Extremism Programme Report**. The Report – which set out 70 recommendations to the Government, local authorities, the police and to City Hall - was shaped by the most comprehensive and in-depth city engagement on violent extremism, shaped by more than a year of listening to experts and crucially London's diverse communities.

Claire Waxman, London's independent Victims' Commissioner published two major reports – **a review into compliance with the Victims' Code of Practice** in London and a **review of the handling of rape cases** - following extensive engagement with justice agencies and victims of crime. VCOP Review published. The reviews put forward a range of recommendations to improve the experience of victims of crime and to increase successful prosecutions.

In response to research into victims' experiences of the criminal justice service in London, in 2019 MOPAC commissioned a new £15m **London Victim and Witness Service (LVWS)** - the UK's largest dedicated service centred on the needs of victims and witnesses of crime. The LVWS brings together a range of practical and emotional support services, ensuring that victims are not handed off multiple times between different organisations and helping them to access the help they need.

Responding to a capacity crisis forcing vital services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence in London to close their waiting lists, MOPAC mobilised quickly to allocate money from **the Mayor's new £15m VAWG Fund**, enabling services to reopen to new admissions and providing capacity to support more victims. In addition, a **new pilot project to reduce female reoffending** was launched. Women in the criminal justice system are highly likely to have been victims of serious crime themselves - more than half of women in prison report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child and more than half have experienced domestic violence. The programme works with women who have committed lower-level offences, such as theft and shoplifting, and has been designed to address the factors and vulnerabilities that can influence reoffending rates amongst women, such as mental health, relationships and financial security.

Victim services were further boosted by a **doubling of City Hall funding for the hate crime victim advocacy service** delivered by Community Alliance To Combat Hate (CATCH), enabling the organisation to support around 900 victims to 'navigate' the criminal justice system, and to help them to improve their safety.

2020

City Hall police funding continued to increase in 2020, reaching record levels as the Government finally began to reverse years of police funding cuts. Thanks to this funding, **MPS officer numbers increased**, exceeding 32,000 by the end of the year after dipping below 30,000 in the two previous years.

The Violence Reduction Unit continued with its ambitious agenda, with a review finding that, as well as the horrific human toll, violence in London cost the city £3bn each year. There is strong evidence of links between domestic violence and other forms of serious violent crime, with City Hall data showing that 13 per cent of serious youth violence victims are also victims of domestic violence, while a third of female serious youth violence victims were also victims of domestic violence and abuse. In response, the VRU invested a further £1m to expand **IRIS**, a project training doctors and healthcare professionals to boost their abilities in identifying the signs of domestic violence and offering earlier help to victims. A further £1m was invested **leadership programme for the capital's frontline youth workers** and the **expansion of a scheme for coaches working with young people in custody**.

Building on the work of the Countering Violent Extremism Programme, in early 2020 the **Shared Endeavour Fund** was launched. Backed with £400,000 investment from City Hall, match-funded by Google.org, the new fund, run in partnership with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), invests in local communities and grassroots groups because evidence shows they are best placed to counter hate, intolerance and extremism.

In March, a new grassroots campaign - **FGM Stops Here** – was launched. The campaign was developed in close partnership with an expert advisory board of survivors, frontline professionals and activists. It highlights the stories of four London women with different experiences of FGM. By amplifying their voices, the campaign aims to challenge the attitudes around this harmful practice within affected communities in London. Since launch, it has exceeded its targets for engagement and reach, and been well received in communities.

As with all parts of society, the response to the Covid-19 pandemic dominated MOPAC's work for most of 2020. The dedication, flexibility and resilience of MOPAC staff was demonstrated throughout, as the organisation worked to meet rapidly changing circumstances while moving overnight to entirely remote working.

While the series of lockdowns arising from the pandemic saw many crime types reduce, domestic abuse increased as people were increasingly confined to their homes. Responding to the urgent need to provide safe places for victims of domestic abuse to seek refuge during the pandemic, MOPAC moved quickly to work with statutory partners and the VAWG sector to provide **emergency accommodation for domestic abuse victims and their families during the pandemic**. This accommodation – mobilised in weeks – provided refuge and wrap-around support services to more than 200 victims and families over the course of the

year. This provision is funded until the expected lifting of all lockdown measures in June 2021.

Efforts continued during the pandemic to tackle violent crime and get dangerous individuals and weapons off the streets. In May 2020 the MPS launched new **Violence Suppression Units** to tackle street violence at a local level. In the year since their launch, VSUs have taken 1,142 weapons off the streets, seized £1.5million in proceeds of crime and made 6,031 arrests for violent offences.

The murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis in May 2020 shocked the world and highlighted how much more must be done improve trust and confidence among the Black community in our public institutions. Recognising the renewed impetus for change and following a series of consultations with more than 400 individuals and groups that either work with or within Black communities, in November 2020 the Mayor published a new **Action Plan for Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing**.

The Action Plan recognises the progress made by the MPS since the Macpherson Inquiry more than 20 years ago. It is more transparent and more accountable than at any time in its history and is more representative of London with more than 5,000 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic officers, up from just over 3,000 a decade ago. But equally it acknowledges that more needs to be done - Black Londoners have less confidence and less trust in the MPS than white Londoners and that there remains a persistent disproportionality in the way certain police powers affect Black Londoners.

The Plan sets out a wide range of actions, including: an overhaul of community scrutiny of police tactics including stop and search, use of force and Taser; £1.7m investment to boost community involvement in police officer training and accelerate the recruitment of Black officers in the MPS; and stricter oversight and scrutiny of the 'smell of cannabis' used as sole grounds for stop and search.

2021

MOPAC has continued to work remotely in 2021 as lockdown restrictions have continued. While the pandemic continues to be a key focus, attention is now turning to the future as London and the whole country emerges from restrictions and finds a new normal.

Efforts to suppress violence continue at pace. In some parts of London, violence is often concentrated in small areas, such as an estate, a cluster of streets, or a main road. The **new £6m MyEnds programme** launched in February and led by the VRU will give communities the backing they need to develop their own initiatives to bring about change in their neighbourhoods, and to provide positive opportunities for young people living in the area.

Young adults have a particularly high risk of reoffending and are more likely to carry out drug, robbery and possession of weapons offences, and be caught up in gang crime. In March, a new **Transitions Hub**, the first of its kind, was announced by MOPAC in partnership with the Ministry of Justice to tackle the underlying issues that increase the risk of reoffending. At the Hub mental health and substance misuse experts will work alongside National Probation Service staff, as part of an innovative new approach ensuring vulnerable

young adults, many of whom had troubled upbringings and poor education, receive the enhanced support they need to avoid a life of crime. Offenders released without a home or a job are significantly more likely to reoffend, so accommodation, training and employment services will also operate from the Hub to help cut crime and violence.

Research conducted during the pandemic found that less than half of Londoners knew how to get terrorist content removed from social media platforms (42 per cent) and 81 per cent either would not know or were unsure how to get online extremist material taken down from popular internet search engines. In March MOPAC launched the free to download **iREPORTit app**, funded by £40,000 of City Hall investment and created in partnership with the national Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit. It will enable Londoners and people across the country to report terrorist content online quickly, easily and anonymously to the police using their smartphone.

Work has continued to tackle the perpetrators of VAWG and improve support for victims. In March MOPAC launched a **new GPS tagging pilot for domestic abuse offenders**. Through the pilot – which will run for a year in every London Borough, domestic abuse offenders will be fitted with tags which will monitor their location, enabling probation services and the police to ensure offenders are following the conditions of their release, and take action if they breach these conditions or commit a criminal offence. This could include conditions such as not entering ‘exclusion zones’ which could cover the address of a victim or ensuring that offenders are arrested if they breach a restraining order, as well as providing GPS location data that can be used to verify a victim’s account of any re-offending behaviour.

March also saw the announcement of **£3 million in MOPAC funding for 42 small grassroots organisations to deliver support for women and girls who have been the victims of violence in the capital**. The new investment will fund helplines, enable victims to access legal support, offer access to counselling, and provide vulnerable victims with phones, travel cards and vital food and medical supplies. Such specialist and small organisations are often the first and sometimes only support for victims of violence against women and girls from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.