

MAYOR OF LONDON

Lord Duvall of Woolwich OBE AM

Chair of the London Assembly
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Our ref: MGLA270226-5105

Date: 20 April 2026

Dear Len,

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) Meeting, 26 February 2026 – Consideration of Final Draft Consolidated Budget for 2026-27

Further to Rebecca Arnold's letter on the motions agreed at the London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) meeting on 26 February 2026, my reply to each of the budget-related motions is below.

Motion 1 – Supporting London's Grooming Victims

I am clear that any individuals, groups or grooming gangs exploiting children for sex are utterly abhorrent, and I want to see justice for every single victim of these horrific crimes. I have delivered vital investment in specialist services to support child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, including a new £2.4m package of support for victims and survivors to ensure they have the care, attention and specialist support services they deserve.

I welcome the national inquiry chaired by Baroness Anne Longfield CBE to hold institutions to account, safeguard children and bring perpetrators to justice. We will play our part by ensuring London contributes, learns lessons that come out of the inquiry, and delivers improvements. The [final terms of reference](#) were published on 31 March. I welcome the Government's action to address delays by previous administrations and am committed to supporting the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) review of historic Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)/A cases within the national operation led by the National Crime Agency and National Police Chiefs' Council. I have been clear that the MPS must follow the evidence wherever it leads, and I will continue to ensure it does everything possible to tackle all CSE in the capital, including grooming gangs, to build a safer London for everyone.

The MPS has already taken important steps to improve its response to group-based CSE. It is also aware of the need to improve data quality so that the nature and scale of this abhorrent crime is fully understood and that nothing is missed. This is a key recommendation of the Casey audit, which the MPS is committed to addressing. Child protection improvements are also being driven through the delivery of the Children's Strategy and a 'child first' approach to establish consistent service delivery, stronger partnerships, enhanced training, and dedicated resources.

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Across London's 32 boroughs, I currently provide £160,000 per year to local safeguarding children boards, and this will increase to £800,000 from April 2026. The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is also represented on the London Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive, which seeks to enhance the safety and wellbeing of children across London. This Executive works strategically across statutory bodies in London, including the MPS, local councils and the NHS, to co-ordinate and grip child protection issues. This includes the response to group-based CSE and will co-ordinate activity in relation to the inquiry and the MPS's historic case review.

Motion 2 – Cyber Helpline

Fraud and cybercrime, along with other forms of tech-enabled abuse, present unique challenges to the police and victim services due to its accelerated pace of change, global nature, and technological complexity. As Mayor, I have called on tech companies to do more to protect the customers they rely on from harm and for the Government to ensure regulation is meaningful and effective.

MOPAC commissions a range of services that support victims of crime, including victims of fraud, cybercrime and other forms of tech-enabled abuse. This includes the new pan-London Stalking Service, which launched on 1 April and will provide specialist technical support to help identify digital vulnerabilities that stalkers may exploit and improve victims' online safety.

MOPAC awarded a grant to The Cyber Helpline in 2023-24 for a 12-month pilot to provide enhanced support to victims of all forms of cybercrime in London. This pilot was then extended for six months to the end of March 2025. However, as a grant-funded pilot, it was never intended to continue indefinitely, and further extensions were not possible because of the challenging financial circumstances MOPAC and the MPS were facing.

The pilot has helped develop our understanding of the scale and complexity of the needs of cybercrime victims in London, and learning from it will continue to inform both the design of future services for victims in London and wider work with the Government and partners to tackle these crimes.

Motion 3 – Halt all Police Front Counter Closures

Any change to the number of police front counters or their opening times is an operational decision for the MPS to take – based on resources, funding and public demand for services. Against this challenging financial backdrop, it is right in these circumstances that the MPS listens to what Londoners are telling us about what is important. The feedback we consistently get, as evidenced by our Policing and Crime Plan consultation last year, is that Londoners want to see more visible neighbourhood policing on their streets.

Following MOPAC's feedback on the MPS's Equality Impact Assessment on the Front Counter decision, and that of other community groups, the MPS came back with a revised Front Counter proposal that will see fewer front counters closing. Specifically, it retains 27 front counters, with two front counters (Charing Cross and Lewisham) remaining open 24/7 and 25 remaining open on reduced hours. This sits alongside the additional mitigation options of introducing digital touchscreens outside of front counters identified for closure. Details of the assessment can be found on the MPS's website at [Changes to the MPS Front Line counter service – EIA](#).

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Further information, including a breakdown of usage, can be found in the Service Change Summary [MPS Front Counters - Service Change Summary](#).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sir Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London