



Shaun Bailey AM

Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee

Sophie Linden
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime
Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

(Sent by email)

6 August 2021

Dear Sophie,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Police and Crime Committee following a recent meeting I had with David Millar and Tayo Prince regarding funding for Safer Neighbourhood Boards (SNBs).

It is disappointing to hear that SNBs are again facing issues with their funding, including the delay in the announcement of funding allocations for 2021-22. While we are pleased to learn that the SNB community engagement budget has now been finalised, and that MOPAC has been keen to limit the impact of the pandemic on SNB allocations, we understand that the budget for SNBs has been cut by 30 per cent. Sadly, this will be felt by SNBs across London. The Committee has repeatedly heard concern from SNBs that their core funding is inadequate and is not enough for them to function effectively. This is not good enough and a great setback for SNBs. We seek reassurance and clarification from you that MOPAC is doing all it can to support SNBs throughout the current funding application process, to ensure that all SNBs receive the maximum amount allocated to them.

The Committee understands that not all SNBs have accessed or spent the money allocated to them over recent years. We would be grateful if you could provide details of funds allocated, applications received and project spending approved, and details of these projects, for each SNB over the past five years.

The Committee has repeatedly raised the concerns of SNBs about the lack of support from MOPAC, including the withdrawal of single points of contact. There is a continuing perceived disengagement by MOPAC and the resulting feeling of neglect from SNBs, who feel that their work is not valued or given enough recognition. Many SNBs still require significant support from MOPAC. The Mayor has said that SNBs provide a “vital – and much appreciated – service for Londoners”. However, the perceived lack of support from MOPAC and the annual funding struggles faced by SNBs, including a reduction in funding, delayed funding announcements and late payments, result in fewer opportunities to build capacity, fewer opportunities for Londoners to contribute to policing in London and raises doubt about the Mayor’s support for such structures and his commitment to meaningful engagement.

The Committee has also previously highlighted concern about how well SNBs have been functioning and has acknowledged that there is room for improvement. However, we are concerned that this has been compounded by the demands MOPAC has placed on SNBs without providing effective support to those that need it.

In addition, the Mayor has made a commitment in his Action Plan for Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing, to work with communities to overhaul London’s community-police engagement structures. This creates a feeling of uncertainty among SNBs for their future, and while this work is taking place, they are expected to continue to function. The Mayor has recognised that they will need support to do so, in particular as a result of the “more limited parameters of operation due to COVID”. The Committee urges you to ensure that all SNBs have the level of support they need to enable their important work with London’s communities to continue. The Committee would also welcome further information on how MOPAC has been supporting the work of SNBs during the pandemic, in particular the support provided to those SNBs that may have struggled in the past, and how it will continue to do so over the forthcoming years.

While the consultation on the Mayor’s Action Plan for Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing showed that more needs to be done to build credibility with Black Londoners and increase their representation on community engagement groups, including SNBs, the Committee urges MOPAC to ensure that all London’s communities are represented on SNBs and other community-police engagement structures in London. The Committee would welcome further information on how MOPAC has engaged SNBs in its work to overhaul community-police engagement structures and what it is doing to support SNBs to improve the diversity of their membership, in order to ensure that all Londoners are proportionately represented on these groups.

We would be grateful if you could provide a response to this letter by 2 September 2021. Please copy your response to Janette Roker and Philippa Goffe, the Committee’s Senior Policy Advisers (janette.roker@london.gov.uk) (philippa.goffe@london.gov.uk).

Yours,

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

Shaun Bailey AM
Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee