



Unmesh Desai • AM City and East

Policing London: A Vision for a Safer City

My 10 Pledges to You

"I hope this document stimulates debate over how we can work together to make London a safer city for everyone."

Unmesh Desai AM



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1. Focus on Violent Crime

We need to do everything we can to prevent violent crime from occurring, and to take strong enforcement action against perpetrators. I want to see the Met continuing to work with schools to give young people a positive experience of being around police officers at an early age. This would complement the excellent engagement work being carried out by the Mayor of London as part of the London Needs You Alive campaign.

It is imperative that decision-makers consult healthcare providers, so that we can understand where knife and gun crime is taking place and intervene to offer the most vulnerable Londoners alternatives when they are the victims of violent crime.

In addition, authorities need to work ever more closely with the community, and through local organisations, to ensure those best placed to work with young people deliver the message about the dangers of carrying a knife and pass on the skills they need to make the most of their lives. I support the Mayor's public health approach which focuses on police, education, health and communities all coming together to tackle the issue. I want to see the police supported in removing weapons from our streets, restricting the flow of weapons and tackling gang activity which drives a culture of fear.

My pledge is to call for a London campaign to use families and faith groups as ambassadors to tackle knife crime. I will also be calling for action to prevent weapons reaching the streets.



2. Action on Acid Attacks

Acid attacks are a despicable crime that can cause immense and life-changing physical and psychological trauma. I support additional training for all emergency service providers to improve the response to acid attacks. The Government's Draft Offensive Weapons Bill has taken on board my call for online sales to be restricted so that acid cannot be delivered to people's homes.

My pledge is to lobby for tougher legislation to restrict the sale of acid, stricter penalties for those that break the law and better resources and training for our blue light services so that they can take acid off the street, provide an emergency response to victims, and catch offenders.



3. Stay Tough on Hate Crime

Since 2014, attacks on LGBT Londoners have almost doubled, Anti-Semitic hate crimes have more than doubled and Islamophobic hate crimes almost trebling. This is absolutely unacceptable.

My pledge is to press the Mayor to continue to focus on all forms of hate crime, both encouraging people to come forward to report instances of hate crime and encouraging the police and Crown Prosecution Service to tackle it wherever it occurs, whether on the streets or online.



4. Tackle Moped Related Crime

We need to continue the work carried out by the Mayor and the police, such as working with the industry to build safer motorcycles, encouraging the public to lock up their scooters securely and ensure that police officers are confident to pursue moped thieves. I had it confirmed with the Met that there is no such thing as a 'no pursuit' policy for moped crime – it is in the hands of officers to decide whether to pursue offenders in each individual case.

My pledge is to lobby the Mayor and the Met to ensure the police have the skills, equipment and support they need to bring offenders to justice.



5. Stamp Out Modern Day Slavery

Modern day slavery is a barbarous relic of a bygone age and has no place in our society. Last year, the Mayor accepted my budget proposal which will lead to a targeted campaign to raise awareness on what constitutes modern day slavery. I also seconded a motion to the London Assembly in which I highlighted the crime as the dark underbelly of London society.

I will monitor the impact of the changes to policing structures under the police borough mergers to ensure that the improved safeguarding teams are equipped to tackle modern day slavery.

My pledge is to continue to lobby for the GLA to strengthen its supply chains so as to act as an example of best practice in relation to stamping out modern slavery, and to push for better police training so that they can spot the signs of modern slavery and feel empowered to take action against perpetrators.



6. End Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

The Mayor of London has led the way in tackling violence against women and girls and the misogynistic attitudes which lead to these behaviours. Tackling VAWG is one of the Mayor's top crime priorities. We also need to ensure survivors of violence against women and girls get the support they need such as properly funded refuges.

My pledge is to lobby for the Met to record gender-based hate crime and I will support the London Assembly's campaign for the introduction of a Domestic Abusers Register.



7. Counter Terrorism

The Met deserve every praise in the way they go about protecting our city and have my support. We need working partnerships at all levels between them and Londoners. Communities united can defeat terror and I will use my office to build this unity.

I pledge to work with faith and community groups, particularly our young people, to counter hate from whatever quarter and to support our police.



8. Improve Victim Support Services

Victims must be placed at the heart of our response to crime. I believe we need to take a holistic approach to victims' services by working more closely with victim's and their families. In particular, I want to make sure that those who have suffered at the hands of knife crime and acid attacks get the support that they need. Witnesses of crime also need support and to have the confidence to come forward and provide information to the police.

My pledge is to call on the Victims' Commissioner to ensure services provided to victims are tailored to the level of support which the person needs. I will also push for more preventative work to tackle re-offending and stop future victimisation.



9. Prioritise Local Policing

Police officers that know the community they serve, and are known by local people, can develop trust, reassure the public and gain an expert knowledge of their area to help prevent and solve crimes. These local officers have a particularly important role in tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB).

I am keen to spread best practice in tackling ASB through neighbourhood policing such as the use of Warning Notices by Tower Hamlets Council's officers, Newham Council's enforcement partnership team of council and Met funded officers and Barking and Dagenham Council's use of Public Space Protection Orders. I support the Mayor's decision to have two dedicated ward officers and one PCSO in each ward as a minimum.

My pledge is to monitor this to ensure that officers stay in the community and wards get the resource they need.



10. Fairer Funding

Fairer funding: The Met has been forced to make over £700 million in cuts since 2010 and will have to make a further £325 million in the next few years. We cannot take a billion pounds out of the Met's budget and expect it not to make a difference. Despite the Mayor of London providing a record £138 million to the Met, police officers' workloads have increased, and police officer and staff numbers have fallen.

My motion to the London Assembly expressing concern over the funding of the Met and seeking to gain a fair funding deal from the Government for London was unanimously passed. I also proposed a motion, again unanimously passed by the Assembly, calling for a pay rise for officers to be funded from Central Government.

My pledge is that I will seize every opportunity to lobby the Government to step up and adequately fund the Met and pay and care for our coppers.

