MAYOR OF LONDON

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
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Our ref: MGLA110920-3916

Date: 30 September 2020

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for the petition presented at the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting on 10 September about the status of Chiswick Police Station.

Although the reopening of Chiswick police station was as a temporary measure while Hounslow Police Station was being refurbished, I understand that there are those within the local community who have valued having access to the station in Chiswick and the availability of a police front counter there.

However, as my Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime described in her previous letter to you regarding Wimbledon Police Station, while the close proximity of a station can offer reassurance to some people, there is no evidence that the presence of a nearby police station reduces crime. In addition, although emergency response officers start and finish their shift at a police building, they generally respond to incidents either from the location of the previous incident they attend or while patrolling in a specified area. The proximity of a police building should not affect the response times of the police.

When my Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) explored the use of front counters in 2016, it was found that just 8% of crimes were reported this way, down from 22% in 2006. Many police front counters in London were found to be poorly used and expensive to run. There are many other ways for Londoners to contact the police, the most popular being by phone (around 70% of crimes are reported this way). The MPS has recognised this and diversified the ways in which Londoners can contact them, especially through the development of an improved website, but there will always be the option of face-to-face contact with the police, and the majority of Londoners will be within 30 minutes travel of a front counter.

The decision to close front counters was not one I took lightly. The Government's significant and sustained cuts to police budgets have forced me to make the difficult decision to protect the levels of officers on the beat by closing some front counters, including Chiswick. I believe this is the best way to protect the public. I made the decision to close police front counters after holding the widest possible consultation, with public meetings in every London borough. I also committed to ensuring that one 24/7 operational police front counter remains in every borough across London.

In the light of the announcement of the national uplift of 20,000 police officers across the UK, with an initial tranche of 1,369 officers for London, the MPS and MOPAC are reviewing their estate strategy. However, the Government has been slow to identify how future allocations of funding to support this vital uplift in officers will be made. Once we have more detail, the MPS will assess their operational requirements in Hounslow and I will, of course, keep you updated on developments.

Thank you again for raising your concerns about Chiswick Police Station. I hope this letter helps to provide an update on the current situation and reassures you that I am committed to ensuring that all Londoners can access the police easily and effectively.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London