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London Assembly Member for City and East
Chair of the Police and Crime Committee



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Sophie Linden
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime
MOPAC

(Via email)

11 March 2020

Dear Sophie

MOPAC Commissioning

The Police and Crime Committee recently looked at MOPAC's commissioning and heard from organisations and local authorities which have been funded by MOPAC as well as from Sam Cunningham, Director of Criminal Justice Policy and Commissioning for MOPAC. Written evidence was received from London boroughs and organisations which had participated in MOPAC's commissioning process. The meeting on the 22 January was attended by Sharon Ogden from Southwark Council, Sherry Peck from Safer London (funded services include provision of Rescue and Response - a pan-London gang exit service) and John Trend from Oxygen (a small-scale voluntary organisation funded by MOPAC via Kingston Safer Neighbourhood Board for delivering a knife crime programme to young people). Recommendations for action identified as a result of our investigation are set out in this letter and are based on both the written evidence received and that provided by the guests attending the Committee hearing.

MOPAC's commissioning activity is intended to aid the development of regional and local partnerships, attracting match-funding with a focus on efficient and effective services. As you will be aware, MOPAC's responsibilities for commissioning have expanded over time as it has taken over grant funding from central government and secured funding from central government funding pots, such as the Police Innovation Fund. In 2012/13 MOPAC's

commissioning budget was £23.6 million which has risen to £53.6 million for 2019/20.¹ In 2013 it became responsible for awarding crime and disorder reduction grants, now known as the London Crime Prevention Fund.² In 2014 it took responsibility from the Ministry of Justice for the commissioning of support services for victims of crime in London; MOPAC has a £15 million contract to run the London victims' and witnesses' service (LVWS). The Mayor has also dedicated funding from his budget for projects and programmes in line with his Police and Crime Plan commitments, including £45 million to the Young Londoners Fund in 2018/19 with a further £25 million announced on 12 February as part of £55.5 million additional funding to tackle violent crime. Most of the devolved funding has come about as a result of legislation devolving responsibility to Police and Crime Commissioners, as well as through negotiation. The Mayor is to be congratulated for achieving this devolution of funding which enables services to be tailored specifically to meet London's needs and allows for a more targeted approach.

It is clear that boroughs and organisations welcome the devolution of funding from central government and that this has brought undoubted benefit. The biggest benefit is that funding can be allocated over a longer-term timeframe, 3-4 years instead of 1-2 years. Sharon Ogden told us that the London Crime Prevention Fund (LCPF) process allows boroughs to plan properly, as secure funds are provided over a four year timeframe against clearly defined areas, and boroughs have the flexibility to set their own priorities within the broad parameters of the fund. The Mayor and MOPAC are to be congratulated on providing such welcome stability which allows boroughs to invest in longer term programmes.

Safer Neighbourhood Boards funding

However, the Committee did hear from John Trend that his small organisation does not gain from this longer-term approach because of having to draw down funding via the Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) for Kingston. This results in funding coming through on a year to year basis and severely limits long term planning. The Committee is also aware that there were severe delays in MOPAC getting funding to SNBs in the last year. The Committee heard from Sam Cunningham that MOPAC regrets the delays in allocating funds to SNBs but said this was due to a change in the funding process. The Committee was assured by Sam that now this is in place delays should not occur for next year's funding.

We strongly recommend that MOPAC ensures next year's funding allocations for SNBs are issued on time and that this year's issues do not recur.

¹ MOPAC,

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/item_14_mopac_commissioning_frameworks_update_final.pdf

² In 2013, the Home Office allocated an un-ringfenced Community Safety Fund, which sat alongside the main policing grant. From 2014-15 these two funds were merged into one un-ringfenced funding pot. See [DMPC Decision 2015 016](#), 2014

Long-term funding and assessment of outcomes

The Committee recognises that longer-term funding of programmes and services provides for greater impact. Sam told the Committee that MOPAC aims to fund all programmes for a minimum of two years to aid consistency and improve outcomes. She told the Committee that the five programmes funded from the co-commissioning fund³ (CCF) will run for three years and that both interim and final impact evaluations will be undertaken.

In support of the need for longer-term assessments, Sharon Ogden told the Committee “you are not going to really see outcomes within six months or a year...to achieve real long-term outcomes the monitoring process does not really cope. There is no follow-up after.”⁴ She referred to the ten year period for the public health approach to tackling violence as an example of needing that longer timeframe to achieve real change.

Written evidence provided to the Committee also supported the call for longer timeframes for funding and a significant number highlighted this as limiting their ability to deliver long-term outcomes: “All London boroughs are working towards or on long-term interventions, boroughs face challenges with short-term funding.” “Longer funding cycles ...allow for longer-term outcomes to be achieved.”⁵

We recommend that:

MOPAC ensures with immediate effect that funding is provided to commissioned services on a long-term basis and meets the target of 3-4 years for the timeframe of all funding allocations; and

MOPAC assesses impact effectively and considers extending data collection beyond the lifespan of a project to properly assess behavioural change, and reports back to the Committee within six months on action it has taken to improve evaluation of longer-term outcomes.

Top-slicing of London Crime Prevention Fund and funding formulas

One major issue flagged by respondents was MOPAC top slicing the LCPF to fund the new co-commissioning fund (CCF). Although London boroughs were told this was to happen some 18 months beforehand, the top slicing still had a significant impact locally. Some reported that staff had to be cut, although MOPAC said that this was offset by ensuring that boroughs that would have lost out on funding were capped to maintain their funding at the previous year’s level. Even so, the reality of the cuts applied raised questions from respondents about whether this was done equitably.⁶ A majority highlighted the perception that funding and commissioning of services by MOPAC are not based on local needs. An

³ MOPAC <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/governance-and-decision-making/mopac-decisions-0/london-crime-prevention-fund-co-commissioning-fund-tranche-1>

⁴ [Appendix 1 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 1 MOPAC Commissioning](#) PDF 38 KB

⁵ Written responses to Police and Crime Committee call for evidence

⁶ Written responses to Police and Crime Committee call for evidence

outer London borough said they received less funding than other boroughs in their Basic Command Unit, despite having areas with higher crime levels.

We recommend that MOPAC publishes the funding formulas that are used for allocations for all main funds and that these should reflect crime levels. We ask for this to be actioned within one month of receipt of this letter and action reported back to the Committee.

Co-commissioning

Sharon Ogden told the Committee that the co-commissioning approach was effective in bringing together all the boroughs. Although there were some issues in working through the initial process, “as a concept it is working.”⁷ But as the CCF only allocated funding under its first tranche to five projects and the second tranche did not proceed, boroughs did not have the opportunity to revisit the co-commissioning model and learn from the process of the first tranche funding.

The residual money from the CCF was eventually distributed to boroughs by the Violence Reduction Unit when they actioned funding allocations to boroughs. This resulted in the distribution of this second tranche of funding being delayed by between twelve to fourteen months, as confirmed by Sam Cunningham.

We recommend that:

MOPAC undertakes a ‘lessons learned’ exercise from its and boroughs’ experience of the co-commissioning fund; and

Ensures that funding allocations are made promptly to boroughs and within agreed timeframes.

Bureaucracy and timeliness

Another issue raised at our meeting was the challenge of the bureaucracy involved for organisations bidding for funding. Sherry Peck of Safer London told us about her experience of bidding to two boroughs for LCPF funding with each requiring a separate bid with different timescales applying. For a service operating on a pan-London basis this was particularly challenging and requires building and maintaining relationships with all 32 boroughs. On the other hand, John Trend told the Committee that it was a challenge to his small organisation to invest scarce resources in the bureaucratic bidding process.

Sharon told the Committee that the switch to online monitoring and grant submissions was a positive move by MOPAC which “is beneficial and streamlining the process.”⁸ However, she identified that a few issues still remained, with different funds having slightly different requirements.

⁷ [Appendix 1 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 1 MOPAC Commissioning](#)  PDF 38 KB

⁸ [Appendix 1 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 1 MOPAC Commissioning](#)  PDF 38 KB

Written evidence to the Committee from a significant number of boroughs and organisations highlighted that MOPAC often issues requests for bids for funding with very short timescales. This limits opportunities for organisations to bid, or to put together a coherent bid, particularly for a small-scale organisation with limited resources. Boroughs also reported finding it challenging to meet short deadlines whilst ensuring due diligence to local government processes.

We recommend that:

MOPAC reviews its processes and requirements for organisations bidding for funding to streamline and improve processes, in consultation with commissioned services, reporting back to the Committee within six months.

MOPAC considers whether a less onerous process could be developed for small organisations bidding for relatively small amounts of funding and reports back to the Committee within six months on changes made.

MOPAC ensures that bidding opportunities are issued in a timely fashion and remove short timescales that may unfairly impact small-scale organisations.

Mapping of funded services, sharing of best practice and dialogue with commissioned services

The Committee heard from John Trend about the challenge of identifying potential funding opportunities “the challenge for us is because we are hand to mouth, our focus is very much on where we can get some more money and where”⁹ He also told the Committee it would help to work more closely with other funded organisations to learn from their practice.”

Sherry Peck agreed that it “has been a perennial problem of people never knowing quite what is in their patch.” She said there is some mapping going on and referred to the John Lyons charity which does some limited mapping of services in the boroughs where it works. Sherry said that MOPAC should easily be able to provide information on services they fund from the data they receive. She said: “it has to sit in City Hall...it is quite a big task.”¹⁰

Sharon agreed with this and told the Committee that: “...there could be better communication of best practice. There is vast knowledge there (MOPAC) on outcomes and on what different organisations are achieving.”¹¹

John Trend said that he would value having a direct dialogue with MOPAC to feed back to them on his organisation’s experiences and what its needs are. Written responses also supported this call for more proactive engagement with MOPAC, particularly via the single points of contact (SPOCs): “I think MOPAC should push their single points of contact to have

⁹ [Appendix 1 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 1 MOPAC Commissioning](#)  PDF 38 KB

¹⁰ [Appendix 1 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 1 MOPAC Commissioning](#)  PDF 38 KB

¹¹ [Appendix 1 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 1 MOPAC Commissioning](#)  PDF 38 KB

more involvement with London boroughs to help share good practice and links between projects/ideas.”¹²

We recommend that:

MOPAC considers how it can provide a map or directory of funded services to be updated on a regular basis and improve the existing map of LCPF funded services and reports back to the Committee within six months on action taken.

MOPAC considers how it can promote and share examples of best practice across London boroughs based on the data they collect and evaluations undertaken and reports back to the Committee within six months on action taken.

MOPAC considers how it can develop a dialogue with all funded services to allow them to give feedback and inform the bidding process, and reports back to the Committee within six months on action taken.

Improved transparency

The Committee is concerned that insufficient information is published by MOPAC on the services it funds. Given the large amount of public money that is involved more evidence should be available publicly that it is being used effectively and having an impact. MOPAC’s quarterly report only provides information on funds allocated with no information on output and impact.

The Committee heard from Sam Cunningham of MOPAC’s commitment to improving transparency and publishing more information about commissioned services. Sam acknowledged that this is the case and told the Committee that MOPAC will be publishing an additional element to its performance report in quarter three that will include “a breakdown of the performance of all (MOPAC’s) contracts in terms of their outputs and outcomes and where we feel they are on track or where we feel there are any current risks or issues”¹³. The Committee welcomes this additional transparency to the delivery of commissioned services and looks forward to viewing the new information.

The Committee also heard from Sam Cunningham and Dr Paul Dawson, the Head of the Evidence and Insight team, about the improvements and progress made in evaluation and assessing funded services. However, they acknowledged that locating published information was not straightforward.

We recommend that MOPAC publishes clear and easy to follow dashboards on commissioned services so that Londoners can see what services are funded in their borough with information on outcomes and impact; and that it reports back to the Committee within six months on action taken.

¹² [Appendix 1 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 1 MOPAC Commissioning](#)  PDF 38 KB

¹³ [Appendix 2 - Transcript - Minutes - Panel 2 MOPAC Commissioning](#)  PDF 38 KB

We hope you find our findings and recommendations helpful. We would appreciate a response to each specific recommendation, setting out how you will implement each one, by 30 April 2020.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'U Desai', with a horizontal line underneath.

Unmesh Desai AM
Chair of the Police and Crime Committee

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ⁱNB Written evidence received by the Committee was provided on an anonymised basis so individual boroughs or organisations quoted in this letter have not been attributed.