

**Joanne McCartney AM**  
Chair, Police and Crime Committee  
City Hall  
London  
SE1 2AA

20 February 2015

Dear Joanne,

## **Review of the Local Policing Model**

I am writing to update you on local policing in London.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) have now completed their review of the Local Policing Model and, following the last committee meeting, I am now submitting this review to you in full, along with the joint review undertaken by the MPS and MOPAC of contact points and the MOPAC review on the transition to the LPM.

We conducted the largest consultation of Londoners into policing when we developed the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan in 2013 and the public overwhelmingly supported our priority of putting bobbies before buildings, to strengthen frontline policing.

The Plan involved major changes to local policing to make best use of resources and to ensure neighbourhood teams were efficient and effective - in line with our statutory obligation under the 2011 Act. We set out a clear choice and accepted that, given finite resources, we had to close front counters and sell police stations, in order to afford to recruit new constables and keep overall police numbers at or around 32,000.

These reforms were not without controversy, and they have taken time to implement, but without making these changes and closing 63 front counters (and disposing of 29 of the buildings) across London, we could not have afforded to recruit 5,000 new Police Constables over the last two and half years.

I am now pleased to confirm that police numbers have reached 31,672 and will rise further in the next few months and that local vacancies have been all but eliminated. In addition, all of the extra 2,600 officers promised for neighbourhoods are now in place.

As part of the consultation and the series of town hall meetings MOPAC hosted in 2013-14, we also explained the changes the MPS were making to local policing, including redeploying those 2,600 officers into neighbourhood teams, and how public access would be provided in new ways in the future.

In the first year of operation, we have received regular public and professional feedback, formally and informally, about how the changes were working on the ground. At the outset, we said that after the first year of operation, we would formally evaluate how the new Local Policing Model (LPM) was working. I am pleased that the MPS has now completed a thorough review of the operation of the LPM and under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner Helen King, has recommended several improvements.

Firstly, in relation to the LPM, the review has found that local policing has been strengthened, with more officers deployed in neighbourhoods and on shift at the times and places when crime is most likely to occur, and this has happened while overall emergency response times have improved.

In parallel with the MPS's operational review, MOPAC evaluated the impact of the LPM on crime and confidence and our findings support the MPS assessment – despite the widespread changes, the LPM has had no detrimental impact on crime performance or confidence rates, both of which continue to improve. Total MOPAC 7 crime is down 19 per cent compared to 2012, with many boroughs already showing reductions of more than 20 per cent, and the Public Attitude Survey shows confidence stands at 67 per cent and the Crime Survey of England and Wales shows a slight increase compared to the baseline, to 63 per cent.

The review contains the MPS's professional judgement of how to improve efficiency and effectiveness which the Management Board approved at their last meeting, and it recommends a number of operational changes that are shortly being implemented. These are designed to reduce abstractions, improve visibility and increase minimum neighbourhood policing presence in the highest crime areas.

We support the changes that the MPS are making – in particular to reduce abstractions, which were too high under the old model and have remained too high with the LPM – and to consider dedicating more officers to higher crime areas as standard. For example, I am pleased to confirm that named ward officers will now not be abstracted, except in emergencies, for anything other than three major public events each year. However, the review does not alter the enhanced neighbourhood policing complement for each borough, which remains as outlined in the Police and Crime Plan 2013-16.

Secondly, MOPAC undertook to review the operation of contact points, which were part of the Mayor's commitment to maintain public access to the police, and were being implemented in London for first time. People are increasingly wanting to access the police on the telephone and online and we are working to meet this demand with the enduring commitment to meet with victims of crime at a place and time convenient for them.

That review found that, while contact point use is variable, they are supported by Londoners and that they have been opened in more sites than originally planned. However, the review found that certain practical issues needed addressing to make contact points work better and some were not operating as intended. For example the review finds that although some contact points had proven popular, to work better greater flexibility is needed for borough commanders to meet local need and that most needed improved publicity, signage and branding to aid public awareness.

In future, a new tranche of trial contact points will seek to maximise footfall by co-locating in high-traffic locations and giving the public more reasons to visit, by coordinating their place and hours of service with crime prevention sessions, street surgeries and activities like bicycle marking, which we know are popular.

The MOPAC review concludes that contact points have a role to play and will remain an important part of the public access offer to Londoners, alongside traditional front counters - of which there are 73 including one open 24/7 in every borough - personal visits, of which there have been 300,000 since November 2013, and contact via phone and internet.

Overall therefore I am content that the Local Policing Model remains the basis for delivering the flexible policing that is needed to fight crime in London. The changes being made by the MPS are the right ones and are in line with the original principles of the LPM - to create a more flexible, responsive and accessible policing model.

In studying the findings of the review, I am even more convinced that there must be no return to the inefficient one-size-fits-all model of the 1-2-3 safer neighbourhood teams, which made promises that were not delivered, and which - though often well liked locally - did not prove effective, operating as they did at a time when crime was higher and confidence was lower.

The MPS and MOPAC accept that contact points need to be improved, and they will be, but they are not the most important part of our reforms, which are about streamlining the MPS and putting thousands more officers into neighbourhood teams, and keeping police numbers up in order to do that. There will be no reversal of our plans to close front counters that the police did not need and the public did not visit, and we will go on prioritising the neighbourhood policing that Londoners want, and having officers focusing on the key MOPAC crimes that most affect our communities.

To return to the old policing model would cost money, impact performance, and make it impossible to go on recruiting new police officers, which remains the public's overriding priority. And given our budget constraints, I know that these reforms reflect the choices that need to be made in the best interests of London. They are also very significant in organisational terms and I hope you will acknowledge the effort and upheaval in the MPS that has taken place, and the leadership that has been necessary to see these reforms through whilst continuing to improve performance.

I would be happy to answer questions on any of these matters when I appear before the Police and Crime Committee, and in the interests of transparency, these documents will be published online next week.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Greenhalgh  
**Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime**