

Unmesh Desai AM

London Assembly Member for City and East



The Rt. Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
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4th December 2018

Dear Home Secretary,

I am writing in advance of the police funding settlement to stress the need for increased funding to be allocated to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). If the funding formula does not deliver a substantial, real-terms increase in funding for the MPS, then I am concerned residents in my constituency of City and East London will receive a lower level of service from the MPS, and by implication, this could leave our community less safe.

London's population currently stands at 8.8 million and will reach 10 million by 2020. Our capital's growing population is moving east, with the number of young people increasing. In 2017/18, the MPS received over 2.1 million 999 calls, an 8% rise on the year before, total notifiable offences have also increased by 6.4%.

Most significantly, serious violence is becoming a burgeoning issue that can't be ignored: knife crime is up 21%, discharges of lethal barrelled firearms have risen by 23% and homicides by 44% in the year to March 2018. Shockingly, sexual offences have doubled in the five years since 2012/13.^[1]

Since 2010, the Met has already been forced to make £850 million in savings due to Government cuts and now faces finding an extra £335 million of savings cuts by 2022.^[2] Based on these figures, there is a real risk that police officer numbers in the capital will drop down to 26,800 – the lowest number since 2002. Police spending per head has fallen faster in London than in any other police force^[3] and as a result, the number of police officers per head of population in London is at the lowest point for 20 years (3.3 officers per 1,000 Londoners)^[4].

We are now facing the stark situation in which we have fewer police officers with more incidents to deal with. We can see the immense pressures and demands that this is placing on our police officers as rest days are cancelled, shifts are extended from 8 hours to 12 hours and safeguarding officers that deal with sexual assaults and rape have caseloads high above the recommended level.

It is also important that the police are paid properly for the hard work that they do. However, the police pay award offered a nominal 2% pay rise without consolidating the consolidation of the 1% award received in 2017/18. This decision went against the recommendations of the independent Pay Remuneration Review Body.

In effect, the pay award amounts to a real terms pay cut. Police officers deserve better than this. This is another reason why it is crucial that the Home Office increases the police funding settlement: police forces should not have to decide between giving officers a fair pay rise and focusing on their local priorities.

^[1] [Metropolitan police Service Force Management Statement](#)

^[2] Mayor of London, [Mayoral Press Release June 2018](#)

^[3] Mayor of London, [Mayoral Press Release June 2018](#)

^[4] Mayor of London, [Mayoral Press Release June 2018](#)

Moreover, London has additional policing duties as a capital and international city. It is acknowledged by the Home Office that London needs £281m of National, International and Capital City (NICC) grant. Despite this it only receives £174m, a shortfall of £107m.^[5] The average London council tax payer pays £61 a year to subsidise this national work.^[6] It is not acceptable that London's taxpayers are picking up the burden for the obligations which London has as our capital and due to its position as an international city. It is clear that the Government should step up and properly fund the NICC.

Writing in June 2018 in the Financial Times, Deputy Commissioner Craig Mackey revealed that *"74p out of every £1 the Met spend goes to staff costs". Mr Mackey also said: "Over the last four or five years, a lot of the focus has been on that 26 pence, how to get the most out of that without taking money out of the front line... the further you go in taking money out you have to go into front-line capability."*^[7]

Speaking to the Home Affairs Select Committee in June 2018, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Force said: *"what we see is this huge rising expectation and demand that is putting a massive strain on our people, and it cannot go on without hard choices: either, as I say, more money, smaller mission, greater risk appetite."*^[8]

In September, Chief Superintendent Gavin Thomas, President of the Police Superintendents' Association told the Association's annual conference that: *"Policing is now utterly reliant on fewer people working longer and harder. I cannot emphasise enough that the delivery of routine policing functions should not be dependent on officers effectively giving their time for free by staying past their shift times or working on leave days. That exploits police officers and defrauds the public. In my speech last year, I said policing was in the middle of a perfect storm. I would now suggest that this great service is on the verge of crisis in many areas"*.

These excerpts provide just a few compelling examples of the many serious concerns that have been raised by policing leaders over the lack of Government funding. These are not political statements, but professional observations that we must all take seriously.

This year, the Mayor was left with no choice but to take the difficult decision of raising the policing precept element of council tax. Overall, the Mayor will be investing an extra £138 million in the Met over the next two years.^[10] This investment will provide for an extra 1,000 officers that would not otherwise have been available.^[11] However, the ability to raise the policing element of Council tax alone will not be enough to reverse the cuts which the MPS have experienced in recent years.

I would now like to ask for your assurances that you are prepared to show the leadership which is required at a national level to increase police funding and give our police officers and communities the vital help and support which they both need and deserve.

Yours sincerely,



Unmesh Desai AM
Assembly Member for City & East London

^[5] Budget and Performance Committee, [Police Funding, Who's Paying the Bill?](#), 10th October 2017, accessed 27/02/18.

^[6] MOPAC, [Written Evidence provided to the Home Affairs Select Committee](#)

^[7] Craig Mackey in Financial Times, [Metropolitan Police warns cuts will hurt ability to combat crime](#), June 2018.

^[8] Cressida Dick, [Home Affairs Select Committee 5th June 2018 session](#).

^[10] Mayor of London, [Mayoral Press Release June 2018](#)

^[11] Mayor of London, [Mayoral Press Release June 2018](#)