MOPAC

John Biggs AM
Chair of the Budget and Performance Committee
Greater London Authority
City Hall, The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

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Dear John,

Smart Policing – How the Metropolitan Police Service can make better use of technology

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your report "Smart Policing – How the Metropolitan Police Service can make better use of technology". Since taking up office in June 2012 I have made it a priority to address the fundamental problems with the MPS IT infrastructure which is expensive and out of date. I am clear that IT offers both the opportunity to be innovative but also to drive out costs. Getting better value for London through the use of modern technology such as Cloud and body worn technology is a priority.

My thinking is not limited to the MPS, I am also looking at how investment in technology can make the whole criminal justice system work better for London. Crime is falling dramatically despite the obvious shortcomings in the MPS's existing technology. Whilst better use of technology holds the key to solving more crimes, improving productivity and boosting public confidence there is no evidence to support your conclusion that the current technology is leading to higher crime levels.

My responses to your specific recommendations are as follows:-

Recommendation One – Ensuring the Metropolitan Police Service has the relevant skills and resources to implement the Met's ICT Strategy

Strong leadership and the engagement of Police Officers at a senior level will be key to delivering the MPS's ICT strategy which is why I and the Commissioner have established a set of meetings of our new oversight board specifically focused on this subject.

AC Mark Rowley supported by Richard Thwaite are responsible for providing clear leadership in the delivery of the ICT strategy. The MPS are now in the process of restructuring the Directorate of Information as part of Met Change to ensure they have staff in post with the relevant skills to deliver the strategy.
I have been leading the engagement with key suppliers to drive out savings from existing contracts.

Recommendation Three – Role of ICT Company

I continue to be actively involved in discussions about the ICT Company, which is yet to be formally established. The tools of policing need to be owned by those who are responsible for decisions about policing. IT is the greatest potential enabler of twenty-first century policing and if there is to be real accountability to PCCs and MOPAC there is a need to demonstrate both independence of government and the ability to co-operate together. PCCs are increasingly looking to achieve their objectives through collaboration with local authorities and criminal agencies; and in my opinion have to control the means of success. We will be pursuing this through discussions with the Home Office and other PCCs.

Recommendation Seven – Investment in new Technology

Significant investment in new technology is needed not just to ensure the antiquated systems are replaced and to improve the productivity of police officers, but also to help deliver the £500M savings I am committed to delivering by 2015/16. Therefore the budget submission for 2014/15 – 2015/16 includes £273M investment in IT. This will be funded without an increase in previously agreed borrowing, principally through capital receipts supported by planned borrowing and capital grant. This level of spend is at least double the previous average annual spend and I therefore intend to monitor delivery of the capital programme very closely to ensure that it delivers on my expectations.

Recommendation Nine – Keeping Londoner's informed of progress

My Police and Crime Plan clearly outlines the benefits of IT, and I will continue to keep Londoners informed of progress in delivering this through a variety of means, including MOPACs annual report, MOPAC Challenge, the budget submission and regular reports to the Police and Crime Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Greenhalgh
Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime