

## **Unmesh Desai AM**

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



**Rt Hon Priti Patel MP**

Home Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

**City Hall  
More London Estate  
London  
SE1 2AA**

(Via email)

6 March 2020

Dear Home Secretary,

### **Suspects released under investigation**

On 9 January 2020, the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee held a regular Q&A meeting with Sir Stephen House QPM, Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service (the Met) and Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime in London. The Committee's statutory role includes both holding the Mayor and MOPAC to account and investigating and reporting on issues of importance to policing and crime reduction in London. At the meeting on 9 January, we discussed the dramatic increase in the number of suspects being Released Under Investigation (RUI), rather than Police Bail.

In the meeting, we found that there is an increasing reliance on the use of RUI by police services, including the Met. I understand that this is due to the changes in the Police and Crime Act of 2017, that RUI provides more time for police to complete investigations, and that, due to reductions in police officers and staff, prior to these changes, it had become increasingly difficult to complete many investigations within the 28-day police bail period.

However, the Committee shares the Met's concerns that the increasing use of RUI does not sufficiently protect victims. We also have wider concerns regarding the lengthy investigative periods commonplace under RUIs. The Committee appreciates that the legislative changes in 2017 were made to prevent suspects being placed under police bail conditions for long periods of time. However, this Committee feels that a revision to the use of bail that would provide enough time for the police to complete investigations relating to high-risk suspects, whilst avoiding imposing indefinite bail conditions, is a plausible ask.

Sir Stephen House QPM advised the Committee that the Met has lobbied significantly to Government for a review of the current legislation. The Police and Crime Committee wholeheartedly supports this campaign.

We believe that, in support of the Met, the current presumption to release suspects under investigation should be reversed for high harm offences, cases with a vulnerable victim, and crimes of national concern. For example, it cannot be right that domestic violence offenders are routinely released under investigation, free to return to their home address without conditions. The reversal of the presumption to use RUI in such cases should be accompanied by a review of authorisation levels and timescales for the use of police bail. These timescales must reflect the time it can take to investigate cases, secure evidence and lab results, and prepare quality and comprehensive cases.

We welcome the Government's current consultation to review the recent bail legislation. We will ensure that we share this letter with the consultation and look forward to hearing the Government's proposals on how the current system can be improved so that the needs of victims come first and police are supported to investigate crimes.

If you would like to discuss this in more detail with myself or the Committee, please do not hesitate to contact Janette Roker, Senior Policy Advisor on 020 7983 6562 or [Janette.roker@london.gov.uk](mailto:Janette.roker@london.gov.uk).

I look forward from hearing from you.

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**