

**Joanne McCartney AM**

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**Date:** 06 March 2013

Dear Mayor Johnson

**RE: DRAFT POLICE & CRIME PLAN 2013-2017 AND ESTATE STRATEGY**

I am writing to you on behalf of the London Assembly Labour Group with our response to your *Draft Police & Crime Plan 2013-2017* and *Estate Strategy*. The Labour Group endorses the response of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee and backs its recommendations. We therefore urge you to examine the Police and Crime Committee's response with care and to take on board its recommendations.

Throughout the duration of the consultation period the London Assembly Labour Group has heard the concerns of Londoners in those areas that we represent regarding the method of consultation, the materials presented to them and the content of those materials. They have also raised their serious concerns regarding the changes the *Draft Police and Crime Plan* and *Estate Strategy* proposes for London's policing. We have taken every opportunity presented to us to raise those concerns with you. I would like to once again voice the concerns of our constituents.

**1) The Consultation Process**

Londoners have reported back to us with a number of concerns regarding the consultation process for your *Draft Police and Crime Plan* and *Estate Strategy*. Your consultation meetings lacked publicity which led to low turnout. The boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark only received the materials for the consultation on the day of the meeting itself leaving no time for residents to consider the proposals in advance of the meeting. Boroughs such as Barking and Waltham Forest had their consultation meeting after your concluding meeting at City Hall due to time-tabling errors. Your office clearly did not communicate these meetings effectively within London's diverse communities as the audiences certainly did not reflect London's diversity, alongside this the utter lack of engagement with young people in every borough was striking.

Many Londoners highlighted at the consultation meetings that they felt just one hour to listen to the presentation and discuss the issues that affected them was insufficient. Many residents reported back to London Assembly Labour Members that they felt that they had not been heard and their questions had not been answered by the panel as the excuse of only having one hour per borough was repeatedly given. The general feedback from constituents given to us tells of confused and angry residents and Labour Members witnessed this frustration first hand at the meetings.

We feel that for the seismic changes that are proposed in your *Draft Police and Crime Plan* and *Estate Strategy* these consultation events only scratched the surface of views and concerns from London's residents.

Alongside these the public consultation you asked residents to respond to an online survey. However, the questions given in the survey were misleading and curtailed people's views. The survey questions only allow for 150 word answers, this was plainly ridiculous when asking the public questions such as "How else could savings to the Met's Budget be made?"

Survey Questions such as "Do you think that the focus [of the Policing Plan] should be on maintaining either: a) Police Numbers or b) Police Buildings." were totally disingenuous. It is clear that the debate surrounding police buildings and police numbers is extremely nuanced and complex. It is certainly not an "either/or" option and presenting it as such is deliberately misleading the public.

## **2) Information Provided to Londoners**

The materials provided to the public to respond to your consultation were entirely problematic and seemed deliberately aimed to mislead the public. Just one example of this is the graphic in Appendix 1 which was used in the slide shows in every borough. It quite clearly shows the Met represented by two triangles. The first triangle representing the Met in 2013 is half the size of the second representing the Met in 2015. This gives the entirely misleading impression that the Met itself would double in size by 2015. This is quite clearly not the case and it is astounding that your office allowed this graphic to be used.

The use of police officer numbers in your *Draft Police and Crime Plan* Consultation Document are also totally disingenuous. It was only revealed through our scrutiny that the police officer numbers you give for Oct 2011 are 'adjusted' and not actual. Nowhere do you indicate that this is the case in any of the literature you provided to Londoners. You have yet to clearly explain to Londoners exactly how these figures were arrived at. The only thing that is clear to Londoners is that when one takes the actual figures for Oct 2011, Londoners get 1,126 police officers fewer than you promise in your Plans and two thirds London's boroughs lose out overall. [Appendix 2]

London Assembly Labour feels method of this consultation and the information provided is so misleading as to call into question the result of this consultation process.

## **3) Changes to London's Policing**

A great many changes to the way London is policed are proposed in your *Draft Police and Crime Plan*. The London Assembly Labour Group supports the analysis of these changes given in the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee's response to this consultation and urges you to take on board the recommendations given in that response (attached). Alongside this many Londoners from the areas we represent have raised their concerns with us regarding the following areas.

### Front Counters

The proposal to close 65 front counters across London is particularly worrying to many Londoners. Many Londoners do not understand how the decision to close particular front counters in their areas was arrived at. Many of the proposals seem to have been based on old footfall data that does not take into account growing populations. The proposals open up black-holes in provision particularly between borough boundaries, for example, in areas such as East Waltham Forest and West Redbridge, East Enfield and West Barnet and at the "Crystal Palace Triangle" around Gypsy Hill station. In some boroughs such as Croydon you are proposing to close down all but one front counter, a proposal that even Assistant Commissioner Simon Byrne is reported as saying "goes too far".<sup>1</sup> We are also concerned about proposals to reduce hours in riot-hit areas such as

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<sup>1</sup> This is Croydon Today, "[Met commander says plan to close all but one Croydon police station drawn up before end of 2011](#)", 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013



Tottenham and the message of the police retreating from these communities that this sends out. Alongside these concerns you have been unable to tell Londoners what savings, if any the closure of front counters will make.<sup>2</sup>

You had previously promised Londoners that you would not close a front counter unless an alternative or better like-for-like provision is found. You and your Deputy Mayor for Policing have confirmed to the London Assembly that alternative or better like for like provision meant the same or better opening hours<sup>3</sup> and a face to face service.<sup>4</sup> However through your *Draft Police and Crime Plan* and Estates Strategy you have rowed back on this pledge, instead proposing "contact points" at Post Offices, supermarkets and coffee shops. You have admitted to the Assembly you have no clear idea what services would be available to public through these contact points, where they would be located, how long they would be open for or how much they would cost Londoners. These are uncoded plans with no agreements in place.<sup>5</sup> There is also no detail given in your Estate Strategy as to what will become of Safer Neighbourhood Bases and whether they may offer an alternative front counter service, without taking these bases into account you can only be looking at part of the picture of police locations in London. London Labour Assembly Members feel it is unfair to ask Londoners to make judgements about their local police stations with no realistic alternative proposals.

#### Safer Neighbourhood Teams

The changes proposed to Safer Neighbourhood Teams in the *Draft Police and Crime Plan* are deeply concerning to Londoners. London Assembly Labour Members have heard from their constituents that they are largely happy with the current Safer Neighbourhood Team structure of policing with its focus on both reassurance and enforcement. Londoners are unclear as to why it is necessary to strip back their Safer Neighbourhood Teams from the current model of 1 sergeant, 2 PCs and 3 PCSOs in most Boroughs to just one dedicated PC and one dedicated PCSO with a named but not dedicated sergeant per ward<sup>6</sup>.

Indications from the MPS that there will be a shift away from reassurance to an enforcement focussed model are of great concern as reassurance and engagement with local communities is essential.<sup>7</sup>

The Safer Neighbourhood Model introduced by the previous Mayor and supported by Londoners is effectively being abolished by your proposals. Continuing to call the new model Safer Neighbourhood Teams is totally misleading.<sup>8</sup>

We have heard from residents in Lambeth who have had serious issues with Project Hannah, which the proposed model seems to replicate, however it does not seem that either you or the MPS have done any serious work to evaluate this model and learn lessons from its application.

Londoners are also particularly concerned about the reduction in PCSOs and the reduction in sergeants in their wards. PCSOs are an important and trusted part of the community policing model and while they lack the powers of arrest they are not seen as officers and therefore are much better placed to engage with the community. Planned cuts to sergeants will see the Met having the lowest supervisory ratios in the country,

<sup>2</sup> London Assembly Budget and Performance committee 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013, London Assembly Plenary 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2013, London Assembly Mayor's Question Time 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013

<sup>3</sup> Mayor's Question Time 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012

<sup>4</sup> London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2012

<sup>5</sup> London Assembly Plenary 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2013

<sup>6</sup> MOPAC, Draft Police and Crime Plan 2013-17

<sup>7</sup> See comments of Dep Commissioner Craig Mackey at Police and Crime Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012 "That will be quite a dramatic change of emphasis and moving it from "reassurance" to "crime fighting" in terms of what [Safer Neighbourhood Teams] do."

<sup>8</sup> See comments of Dep Commissioner Craig Mackey at Police and Crime Committee, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012 "The next thing we will do is in terms of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, we want to retain that brand because we respect how totemic it is."

lower than our most similar forces.<sup>9</sup> Londoners expressed concern that their local sergeants will become increasingly stretched if made to work across too many wards and may begin to lack local knowledge that is the bedrock of local policing

Performance Measures and Priority Crimes

Your *Draft Police and Crime Plan* sets out three 20% targets. A 20% cut in the MPS's budget, 20% reduction in seven crime types, a 20% growth in public confidence.

The London Assembly Labour Group has long been opposed to a 20% cut in the MPS's budget. While we recognise the need for savings we believe that 20% goes too far, too fast. The HMIC warned in 2011 that cuts beyond 12% would impact on frontline services. The Labour Group would not have gone beyond this 12% figure, as we feel that doing so would put the safety of Londoners at risk. The London Assembly Labour Group once again calls on the Mayor to reconsider such drastic cuts to London's police.

Many of our constituents have queried the pledge to cut seven crime types by 20%. It is unclear to them why just seven crime types were selected, three of which referring to vehicle crime, while the plan is silent on the need to reduce other types of crime. There is little detail on the impact of gun and knife crime or dangerous driving for example. There are also no targets relating to violence against women, domestic violence or indeed hate crime. Our constituents are concerned that resource will be directed from the fight against other crimes in order to achieve your pledge, they are also concerned about the message this sends out namely that *"The MPS think that vehicle theft is more important than sexual violence"*.

While we welcome the challenge to improve public confidence in the MPS, Londoners are again unclear as to why 20% was selected as the target. We have heard again and again from Londoners that the best vehicle for increasing their confidence in the MPS is strong local policing: police officers and PCSOs who they know and who know their area. We are very concerned that the proposed changes to London's Safer Neighbourhood Teams will have a detrimental impact on public confidence as the MPS moves away from reassurance and building community relationships and moves toward an enforcement model. The London Assembly Labour Group therefore urges you to reconsider these changes.

I wish to re-emphasise that the views expressed in this submission are not those of the Labour Group in isolation but have been informed by our attendance at your consultation meetings, our discussions with local representatives and stakeholder groups and communications from those Londoners who we represent (some of whose written responses I enclose). I ask therefore, that you carefully consider their views before coming to your final decision.

Yours sincerely



**Joanne McCartney Assembly Member**  
London Labour Spokesperson for Policing and Crime

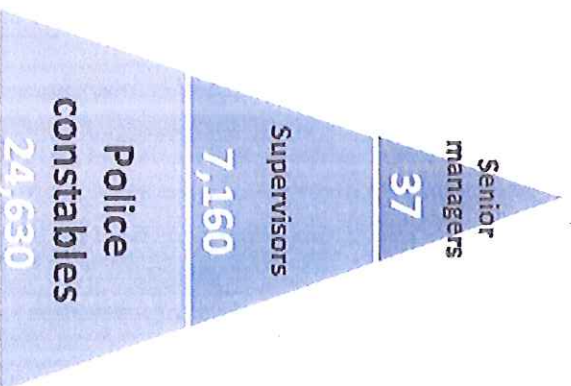
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<sup>9</sup> [Value for money profiles](#), HMIC, 2012

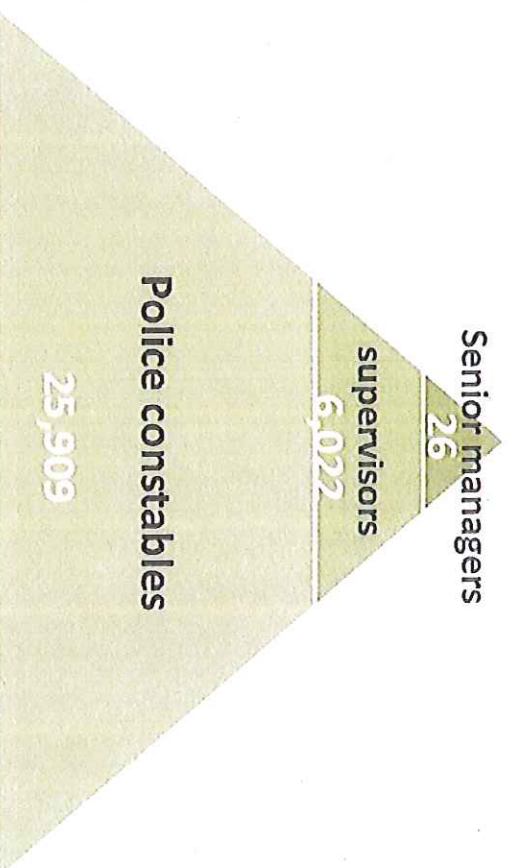


# Reform

2013



2015



MOPAC

MAYOR OF LONDON  
OFFICE FOR POLICE AND CRIME

## APPENDIX 2

Borough	Draft Police and Crime Plan Oct 2011 police strength (1)	Oct 2011 actual police strength (2)	2015 Forecast Police Strength per Borough (3)	MOPAC's Claim of extra officers per Borough in 2015 (4)	Actual Extra Officers in 2015 (5)	Difference btw 2015 Claim and 2015 Actual
Barking & Dagenham	426	437	493	67	56	11
Barnet	523	554	564	41	10	31
Bexley	344	387	360	16	-27	43
Brent	658	664	660	2	-4	6
Bromley	428	493	482	54	-11	65
Camden	749	796	751	2	-45	47
Croydon	623	694	740	117	46	71
Ealing	664	698	727	63	29	34
Enfield	524	560	609	85	49	36
Greenwich	551	631	615	64	-16	80
Hackney	682	733	685	3	-48	51
Hammersmith & Fulham	553	567	556	3	-11	14
Haringey	658	689	664	6	-25	31
Harrow	355	365	385	30	20	10
Havering	346	381	394	48	13	35
Hillingdon	480	516	525	45	9	36
Hounslow	472	495	546	74	51	23
Islington	643	680	647	4	-33	37
Kensington & Chelsea	521	538	523	2	-15	17
Kingston upon Thames	278	303	313	35	10	25
Lambeth	870	949	874	4	-75	79
Lewisham	593	634	647	54	13	41
Merton	344	372	356	12	-16	28
Newham	765	780	836	71	56	15
Redbridge	444	469	530	86	61	25
Richmond upon Thames	286	298	301	15	3	12
Southwark	814	852	816	2	-36	38
Sutton	295	340	337	42	-3	45
Tower Hamlets	715	746	717	2	-29	31
Waltham Forest	523	547	642	119	95	24
Wandsworth	564	589	579	15	-10	25
Westminster	1412	1,471	1413	1	-58	59
London wide	18103	19229	19287	1184	58	1,126

## NOTES

(1) Figs in MOPAC Draft Police and Crime Plan pg 10

(2) figs on London Datastore (see Officer Strength tab on excel data sheet)

(3) figs in MOPAC Draft Police and Crime Plan

(4) figs in MOPAC Draft Police and Crime Plan

(5) real Oct 2011 figs minus 2015 forecast

(6) Claim of extra officers in 2015 minus Actual 'extra' officers in 2015