

Subject: Research into Young People's Views of Stop and Search for Police and Crime Committee Investigation

Report to: GLA Oversight Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 18 July 2013

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for expenditure to commission external research for the Police and Crime Committee's investigation into stop and search.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee approves expenditure to a maximum of £15,000 from the 2013/14 scrutiny programme to commission external contractors to provide research into young people's views of stop and search; and**
- 2.2 **That the Committee notes that the Executive Director of the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Police and Crime Committee, will commission the external contractors to carry out the external research, subject to the Committee approving this expenditure.**

3. Background

- 3.1 In line with its terms of reference, the GLA Oversight Committee has the power to approve all scrutiny-related Assembly expenditure and proposals for use of rapporteurs, in conformity with the Assembly's Decision Making Framework procedure. The Committee is therefore being asked to consider the use of resources to facilitate the investigation rather than to discuss the details of the investigation.
- 3.2 On 27 June 2013, the Police and Crime Committee agreed to undertake an investigation into stop and search. The Committee has established a Stop and Search Working Group to gather evidence on its behalf. This Group will report its findings to the Police and Crime Committee which may then make recommendations to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and/or the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The detailed proposal for this investigation is annexed to this report. The investigation's terms of reference are:
- To assess the policing implications of the MPS's new approach to stop and search including examining performance figures.

- To examine whether the new policy is leading to any changes in the quality of stop and search encounters.
 - To find out if the new approach is changing perceptions of stop and search.
 - To investigate how the police are made accountable for their use of stop and search.
- 3.3 To allow the Police and Crime Committee to assess the impact the new approach is having on community perceptions and experiences, this paper suggests commissioning a piece of primary research. This is required to understand how the MPS's change in policy has affected young people's experiences of stop and search and whether headline improvements in performance have any impact on their perceptions of the police. A purely statistical analysis of the MPS's performance figures will not reveal anything about public experiences or attitudes.
- 3.4 The external contractor commissioned would be required to do the following work, in consultation with the Scrutiny Team:
- Identify a sample of young people ensuring a diverse range of people are consulted from across London;
 - Devise a suitable methodology to ensure the research produces useful, robust, in-depth and representative findings about young people's experiences and attitudes;
 - Conduct the research via the most appropriate means; and
 - Present the findings of the research to inform the Police and Crime Committee's own report and recommendations and form part of the published evidence base for the Police and Crime Committee's report.
- 3.5 The Police and Crime Committee has considered whether this research could be undertaken in-house. However, an assessment suggests that the GLA does not have the expertise to run a credible and in-depth investigation of this type. An external contractor would add value in the following ways:
- Have access to a network and contacts to identify and secure the participation of a diverse group of young people; and
 - Have the experience and expertise to manage discussions of a potentially sensitive and contentious topic.
- 3.6 This will ensure that the research delivers a robust and in-depth picture of young people's perceptions of the police's use of stop and search powers in London. The external contractor will be expected to provide information about the following:
- How stop and search affects relationships with, and attitudes to, the police – considering both participants' individual experiences and whether and how the attitudes of their friends, families and peers to stop and search affect their own perceptions of the powers.
 - MPS policy – whether young people are aware of the MPS Commissioner's commitments to improve stop and search and the associated targets.¹ Whether they believe the targets will make a difference and if other action is needed by the MPS leadership team.
 - Practical changes in the last year – whether young people have noticed any changes in the quantity, type of quality of stop and search since the new policy was introduced.
 - The role of performance information on attitudes – whether young people's views change when they see performance data on stop and search.

¹ The new approach and associated targets are explained in full in the Committee's scoping document, which is attached at appendix 1 for reference.

- 3.7 This would help Police and Crime Committee Members in identifying key issues to pursue with senior MPS representatives and MOPAC. It is also likely that findings from this research could be used in future investigations, as has been the case for research for the Committee's victim care investigation, for example.
- 3.8 Although the expertise for this investigation is not available in-house, we expect the successful bidder to engage the GLA's peer outreach team in its work. It is proposed that consideration will be given to bids that can provide new skills and experiences to the peer outreach team, for the benefit of the wider GLA group.
- 3.9 It should be noted that there has been previous research into young people's experiences of stop and search. However, this project will focus more explicitly on recent experiences since the change in MPS policy and explore the extent to which a change in performance figures has the potential to change ingrained public perceptions.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The Police and Crime Committee agreed to recommend to the GLA Oversight Committee that it approve expenditure to a maximum of £15,000 to commission external research into young people's views about stop and search. Provisional discussions with external research organisations suggest this sum would enable the Committee to procure credible primary research with a sufficient number and range of young people in London. If the GLA Oversight approves expenditure, the contract would be let in late July and findings produced in October/November to inform the Police and Crime Committee's investigation, which is due to conclude by the end of 2013.

Assembly Decision Making Framework

- 4.2 The Assembly's Decision Making Framework includes a requirement that all four of the following criteria be considered by committees in deciding whether external technical assistance is required and appropriate on any given project:
- That the proposed project requiring technical assistance is clearly and tightly defined. This would ordinarily mean that the consultant would be used for a discrete piece of technical analysis or research rather than simply as an adviser for the whole of a scrutiny.
 - That the proposed project cannot be readily undertaken by in-house staff, either because of a lack of necessary expertise or because of a lack of capacity.
 - That the analysis required from consultants is not readily available and cannot be acquired elsewhere.
 - That the information required from consultants would be a significant contribution to the aims of the scrutiny. Technical assistance to scrutiny committees involves in most cases the analysis of information or data provided to the committee, rather than primary research.
- 4.3 Paragraphs 3.3 – 3.9 of this report are designed to demonstrate that all four of the criteria set out in the previous paragraph have been addressed and that external research is necessary and appropriate.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Section 59 GLA Act 1999 (as amended) (the GLA Act) requires the Assembly to keep under review the exercise by the Mayor of his statutory functions. Section 54(1) GLA Act enables the Assembly to

arrange for any of its functions to be discharged by a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly or by a single member of the Assembly.

- 5.2 The Contracts Code enables the Executive Director of Secretariat to procure technical support. Under the Assembly's decision making framework the Executive Director of Secretariat can award consultancy contracts up to £50,000.
- 5.3 The procurement process must comply with the Authority Contracts Code of Practice. The Contracts Code requires that, for contracts with an estimated value of between £5,000 and £24,999, a minimum of 3 written quotes are sought. Officers are required to demonstrate that value for money has been achieved.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 All costs arising from the appointment of an external contractor to provide research into young people's views about stop and search would be met from the 2013/14 scrutiny programme budget. Subject to approval, there is provision of £15,000 for commissioning this external support during 2013/14.
- 6.2 The contract would be let and managed in accordance with relevant GLA policies and procedures. As this project is consultancy based, the requirements of the GLA's Expenses and Benefits Framework and the Financial Regulations would also be adhered to.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Proposal for Police and Crime Committee investigation into stop and search – scoping report

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
Contact Officer: Claire Hamilton, Scrutiny Manager
Telephone: 020 7983 5845
E-mail: claire.hamilton@london.gov.uk