Background

The Police and Crime Committee is investigating crime on public transport in London.

The investigation will consider how to reduce crime and improve safety on public transport, and how the Mayor is working with key partners to achieve these goals.

The Police and Crime Plan 2013-16 sets out the Mayor’s mission and priorities for policing and crime reduction in London and the key priorities which guide the work of the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime. One of these priorities is to ensure that all of London’s public service agencies work together, and with communities, to prevent crime, seek swift and sure justice for victims and reduce re-offending.

Improving safety on public transport is a priority for the Mayor. The Mayor’s Transport Strategy (MTS), published in May 2010, sets out the Mayor’s vision to be the best ‘big city on earth’. One of the MTS goals is to ‘improve the safety and security of all Londoners’. Its expected outcomes by 2031 are:

- Crime rates on the London Underground and Docklands Light Railway (DLR) to drop by 15 per cent to 11.1 crimes per million passenger journeys
- Crime rates on London buses to drop by 25 per cent to nine crimes per million passenger journeys
- Reduction in the proportion of Londoners who have significant concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport such that it deters them from using it.


Despite increasing passenger numbers, crime on London’s buses has fallen by 60 per cent in the last five years and the rate of crime for London Underground/DLR was eight per
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million passenger journeys. The Mayor argues that these improvements are as a result of ‘continued investment in policing, the use of effective problem-solving and innovative tactics’.

TfL fund more than 2,300 police officers across London’s transport network to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. Policing the network is split between three policing agencies:

- Metropolitan Police Service – the Met’s Roads and Transport Policing Command (RTPC) oversees policing on London’s roads and transport network
- British Transport Police (BTP) is responsible for policing the London Underground, DLR, Tramlink, London Overground, Emirates Air Line and the rail network in London
- City of London Police is responsible for safety and security in the ‘square mile’ of London

Purpose of the investigation

The investigation’s terms of reference are:
- To examine crime trends on public transport and to determine whether certain groups of Londoners are more at risk of becoming a victim
- To identify the challenges and opportunities to further reduce crime on public transport in London and to assess how the key agencies are responding
- To identify the risks associated with the introduction of the night tube relating to crime and safety on London’s public transport network
- To make recommendations in relation to reducing crime on public transport in London.

Key issues to explore

While crime across the public transport network remains relatively low, challenges exist. The Committee will examine these challenges in more detail, in particular:

- The risk of becoming a victim of crime can increase significantly depending on who is travelling and when and where passengers are travelling
• Reported sexual offences rose by 30 per cent across the public transport network in 2014/15. According to the TfL safety and security survey, around 15 per cent of Londoners have experienced unwanted sexual behaviour on the transport network. But 90 per cent of those affected do not go on to report it to the police. Project Guardian, a long-term initiative involving the Met, TfL, BTP and City of London Police launched in April 2013, aims to reduce sexual assault and unwanted sexual behaviour on public transport in London. It aims to increase public confidence in reporting unwanted sexual behaviour and reduce the risk of becoming a victim by proactively targeting offenders.

• Night tube is due to start running in the near future. The BTP has plans for a ‘robust police presence’ and has announced that more than 100 officers will patrol the 144 stations that will be open throughout the night each weekend. Chief Constable Paul Crowther, BTP, has said that he is confident robust analysis has been done to ensure the tube remains safe for passengers and staff and that it has ‘got the resources about right’.

• The growth of London’s population and increasing passenger numbers will place increasing demands on the transport system. London’s is expected to grow by a further million over the coming ten years and is predicted to grow by a further 640,000 in the decade after (to 2031). This growth will generate a significant range of infrastructure requirements and it is estimated that transport investment of £3.5 billion to £4.5 billion a year to 2031 will be needed. It will also bring new policing challenges.

• The taxi and private hire trades are important to London’s public transport network. However, a lack of licensed taxi and private hire services can lead people to make unsafe transport choices. Crime associated with these services is also a concern. In particular, a report by the London Assembly Transport Committee, Future proof, taxi and private hire services in London, found there were issues with touting, a lack of enforcement against illegal activity and whether resources are being targeted effectively.
Questions for the investigation

The investigation will examine current performance and assess the work in hand to prevent crime on public transport. In light of these issues, the Committee will seek to answer the following key questions:

- What are the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of the bodies preventing and responding to crime on public transport in London?
- How are the key agencies working together to respond to crime on public transport in London?
- How do levels of crime on public transport differ across London?
- What specific challenges are there in reducing crime on the public transport network?
- What work has been undertaken to reduce crime against staff working on the public transport network?
- What impact has Project Guardian had on encouraging reporting of unwanted sexual behaviour and reducing sexual offences on public transport?
- What work has been done to prepare for the introduction of the night tube relating to crime and anti-social behaviour – including demand on policing and the safeguards being put in place?
- What are the key challenges the Met faces when responding to touting and illegal activity by the taxi and private hire trades?
- How is technology being used to prevent crime on public transport in London?
- What more can be done to prevent crime on public transport in London?

How the Committee will conduct the investigation

Public meetings

The Committee will hold two meetings in October and November 2015. It will invite a range of expert guests to give evidence and examine crime on public transport.

Call for evidence

The Committee will also issue a targeted call for written evidence and invite views from a range of organisations.
Site visit
The Committee will seek an opportunity for a site visit to explore how crime on public transport is prevented in London.

How to contribute
The Committee welcomes written views and information to inform its review. Submissions should aim to address some or all of the questions listed above and any other issues the Committee should consider. Please send submissions to Rachel Roscow at rachel.roscow@london.gov.uk

About the Committee
The Police and Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and reviews the Police and Crime Plan for London. The Committee can also investigate anything which it considers to be of importance to policing and crime reduction in Greater London and make recommendations for improvements.

For further information about the Committee and its work go to http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/assembly