



Neil Garratt AM
Chairman of the Budget and Performance Committee

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
(Sent by email)

25 January 2024

Dear Mr Mayor

I am writing to you on behalf of the Budget and Performance Committee, following its meeting on Monday, 8 January 2024.

During the meeting, we heard from your Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, alongside representatives from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The Budget and Performance Committee remains committed to fostering a transparent and accountable financial framework through the effective scrutiny of the GLA's finances. The five recommendations in this letter are intended to support and improve the next drafts of your Budget for 2024-25.

The Committee notes with disappointment that Sir Mark Rowley, the MPS Commissioner, sent his apologies for the meeting, despite having previously agreed to attend. This affected the clarity and detail of information provided to the Committee, particularly around strategic decision-making. The Committee is also writing to the Commissioner separately about this.

Delivery of the New Met for London programme under the Annex One budget

The MOPAC/MPS 2024-25 Budget Submission includes two different budgets, presented as an Annex One budget and Annex Two budget. The Annex Two budget includes an additional £143.6 million¹ of unfunded planned expenditure, including £70.1 million² to deliver the New

¹ [MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 to 2026-27](#), 5 December 2023, p8

² [MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 to 2026-27](#), 5 December 2023, p15

Met for London programme. The Committee notes that your Consultation Budget was primarily based on the Annex One budget although it does include a reference to the additional expenditure.³

The Committee asked for an explanation about how the approach of including an Annex One and Annex Two budget in the Budget Submission should be interpreted and was concerned about the lack of clarity in the responses given.

Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, told the Committee on 8 January 2024 that:

“I think the MOPAC submission is very clear as to the two sets of figures. One set of figures already has investment for New Met for London which is already being spent this year, in terms of the leadership, call handling and victim support. That has already been spent and that is already baselined into the budget. New Met for London reform will continue... The second set of figures includes additional reform and additional aspirations.”⁴

However, this appears to conflict with the explanation provided by Lisa Kitto, Chief Finance Officer for MOPAC, that *“The difference between the two is, just as the Deputy Mayor has explained, the investment required to deliver New Met for London. Annex One excludes the New Met for London ambition. Annex Two includes those costs.”⁵*

The Committee understands the importance of reforming the MPS via the New Met for London programme and would like to better understand how, and to what scale, it will be delivered under the Annex One budget. In response to questions about its delivery, Clare Davies, Chief People and Resources Officer for the MPS, advised that:

“We are really clear that that has to be delivered. Therefore, in the absence of any additional funding, we would have to prioritise the existing resources we have against those reform ambitions and the performance ambitions in our new framework.”⁶

The Committee urges that further clarity is provided about how the New Met for London programme will be delivered if no further funds are forthcoming, and what will be reprioritised to enable its delivery.

Recommendation

- 1. The Committee recommends that, once funding has been clarified in the Final Draft Consolidated Budget, you set out the extent of the New Met for London programme that will be delivered with the funding available.***

³ [Mayor's Consultation Budget 2024-25](#), 18 December 2023, p54

⁴ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p6

⁵ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p5

⁶ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p8

Addressing the £72 million budget gap

The MOPAC/MPS 2024-25 Budget Submission included a gap of £54 million in its Annex One budget.⁷ Since then, the Home Office's provisional police settlement announced on 14 December 2023 has confirmed that it will provide £33 million less than you expected in your original budget assumptions.⁸ However, on 18 December 2023, the Government confirmed in its provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2024 to 2025 that the GLA could increase the policing precept levied via council tax by £13 for a Band D household,⁹ which was more than you anticipated in your original budget assumption.¹⁰ The Chief Finance Officer for MOPAC therefore confirmed to the Committee on 8 January 2024 that, as a result, the budget gap *"is now increased to £72 million"*.¹¹ We note that this gap could increase even further if you decide not to levy the full amount allowed by the policing precept, and that a final decision has not yet been made.

The Committee asked about the strategy to address the gap and was told by the Chief People and Resources Officer for the MPS that the MPS is *"starting to take some cuts in services and reprioritising, as we have already talked about. All of those options are being clearly assessed..."*.¹²

She added that *"Over the last ten years... we have taken a lot of costs from those areas that one would normally go to in order to protect frontline policing and reduce that budget gap. We do not think those options are available to us to the extent of the gap we are closing"*.¹³

The Committee recognises the scale of the task in finding savings to address the gap and notes with concern that the gap is planned to increase to £246.3 million in 2026-27.¹⁴ However, there is little detail provided on what specific measures the MPS will take to address the budget gap. The Committee requests that more detail about how this will be achieved is included in the next draft of the 2024-25 budget, or by letter to the Committee in response to this recommendation.

Recommendation

- 2. The Committee recommends that full details of how the MPS budget gap will be addressed are shared with the Committee and Assembly ahead of its consideration of your Final Draft Consolidated Budget. This should include what services will be affected by cuts and reprioritisation, and the impact this is anticipated to have on policing in 2024-25.***

⁷ MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 to 2026-27, 5 December 2023, p47

⁸ [Provisional police grant report \(England and Wales\) 2024 to 2025 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118442/provisional-police-grant-report-england-and-wales-2024-to-2025-accessible.pdf)

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2024-to-2025/consultation-provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2024-to-2025>

¹⁰ [Mayor's Budget Guidance for 2024-25](#), p14 (a 3 per cent limit has been assumed, in this Budget Guidance, for both the police and non-police precepts)

¹¹ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p8

¹² Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p9

¹³ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p9

¹⁴ [MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 to 2026-27](#), 5 December 2023, p2

The delayed publication of the Estates Strategy

The Committee asked for an update on the publication of the long-promised Estates Strategy and was disappointed to hear from the Chief People and Resources Officer for the MPS that publication before the pre-election period is “unlikely”.¹⁵

The Committee notes with concern that an MPS Estates Strategy has been promised and expected for the entire London Assembly 2021-24 term. The delayed Estates Strategy has negative impacts for effective and timely decision-making. For example, the Deputy Mayor advised that the delay “puts a freeze on some of the buildings that do need to be sold. It puts a freeze on those because nothing can happen until the final Estates Strategy is finalised.”¹⁶ The absence of the Strategy also constrains the ability of the Committee to effectively scrutinise the MPS’ plans for its estates.

The Committee noted the Deputy Mayor’s comments on the approach to developing the Estates Strategy:

“There are lessons to be learned in this going forward once we have the Estates Strategy. Any other iteration of an Estates Strategy needs to be looked at in a different way so that we do not get caught in this bind again of trying to have an all-singing, all-dancing Estates Strategy.”¹⁷

The Committee welcomes the idea of a refreshed approach to developing the next Estates Strategy.

The Committee recognises that in New Met for London, the MPS sets out cultivating a stronger presence in communities as one of its top priorities. Commissioner Rowley has said that neighbourhood policing officers need to be within walking distance of their patch.¹⁸ The Committee understands that with such a change in approach will have an effect on how the police estate will be used, it follows that any strategy will need to be re-assessed as a result.

Recommendation

- 3. The Committee recommends that the MPS commits in writing to this Committee to a new and realistic deadline for publishing the Estates Strategy. In advance of this publication the Committee would like to see details of the current extent of the estate and how each property is being used.***

Detail on a land transaction in the 2023-24 capital expenditure budget

The 2023-24 capital expenditure budget for MPS was £395.7 million. This was later revised to £286.6 million to “reflect a land transaction that is now planned for future years.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p20

¹⁶ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p21

¹⁷ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p21

¹⁸ <https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/speech-question-answer-transcript.pdf>

¹⁹ [MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 to 2026-27](#), 5 December 2023, p9

The Committee asked for further details about this transaction and was told by the Chief Finance Officer for MOPAC that “we cannot go into specifics around the specific land transaction” due to “commercial issues”.²⁰

The Committee appreciates the offer made by the Chief Finance Officer for MOPAC of a private briefing on this issue.²¹ However, in the interest of transparency and accountability, the Committee asks that more information is made publicly available.

Recommendation

- 4. The Committee recognises the commercial sensitivities regarding MOPAC publishing further detail about the nature of this large-scale land transaction and would welcome a briefing from MOPAC as offered in the meeting and would encourage MOPAC to publish such details as they can, when possible.***

Costs of delivering the Connect IT programme

The MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 highlights that:

“The Connect project will bring together seven existing IT systems making it more efficient for officers to conduct their routine business. Delays in the implementation of these systems are impacting on the ability to deliver all of the anticipated efficiencies and benefits when the programmes were created. New business cases to ‘reset’ expectations are being developed. For Connect this has resulted in the need for additional investment both in the short and longer term.”²²

While it is possible to see some of this additional investment in the MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25, which identifies new growth spending of £34.2 million between 2024-25 and 2026-27, the budget document does not identify the full cost of the project and how this compares with the initial estimate.²³

MOPAC’s and the MPS’ commitment to delivering Connect was explained by Diana Luchford, Chief Executive, MOPAC, who advised that: “There are some things in the budget that it is not really possible for money not to be spent on. They are not really discretionary. That includes some of the additional funding on the technology programmes like Connect...”²⁴

The Committee understands that Connect is a large-scale and transformational programme and is keen to better understand the costs of delivering it and whether there is a risk of further overspend on it. In response to a question about the use of reserves, the Deputy Mayor explained that: “reserves have been used to bridge budget gaps, as well as to make sure that

²⁰ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p20-21

²¹ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p20

²² [MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 to 2026-27](#), 5 December 2023, p14

²³ [MOPAC/MPS Budget Submission 2024-25 to 2026-27](#), 5 December 2023, p49 2024-25 £13.3m, 2025-26 £10.7m and 2026-27 £10.2m

²⁴ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p16

they can pay for unexpected things during the course of the year such as Connect. One of the big run-on reserves this year has been Connect.”²⁵

The Committee requests further detail about the overall cost of delivering Connect, the planned delivery timeline, and the benefits that Connect will deliver.

Recommendation

- 5. The Committee recommends that in the Final Draft Consolidated Budget, or by letter to us in advance of that publication, you provide further detail about the costs and timelines of delivering the full Connect IT project for the Met.***

We appreciate the GLA officers’ attendance and engagement with the Budget and Performance Committee. We look forward to your response to this letter by 9 February 2024.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Garratt AM

Chairman of the Budget and Performance Committee

²⁵ Budget and Performance Committee, Transcript, 8 January 2024, p29