

MOPAC Budget 2025-26: update on Metropolitan Police Service ‘tough choices’

The MOPAC budget within the GLA Group Final Draft Budget is based on funding confirmed as 24 January 2025.

Since then, additional funding of £83.2m has been confirmed (comprising a combination of recurrent and one-off contributions from the Home Office and the Mayor).

The ‘tough choices’ necessary to balance the budget that are presented in this paper reflect the position before this additional funding was confirmed. MOPAC and the Met are working to determine how best to use this funding, which will be set out in the final MOPAC budget to be published in March.

Overview and Background

1. This document sets out the steps that the Metropolitan Police Service (‘the Met’) proposes to take in 2025-26 to live within its available funds. These proposals are being considered in more detail before being finally confirmed for implementation.
2. As the Draft MOPAC Budget Submission 2025-26 (published November 2024) and subsequent GLA Group budget documents set out, the Met’s funding envelope means that it must make some tough choices with effect from April 2025 to operate within its available budget. These tough choices will change the service the Met delivers to London.
3. These changes will not be as severe as the worst-case scenario that was being planned in Autumn 2024 at the time the Draft MOPAC Budget Submission 2025-26 was published. A significant amount of additional funding has been received since then from the Government and from the Mayor of London. These additional funds – much of which are expected to be recurrent – will allow the Met to keep a higher number of police officers on the streets of London than was believed possible at the time of the November budget submission.
4. The current Mayor has invested more in the Met than any previous Mayoralty by a significant margin – more than doubling investment from City Hall in policing to a record £1.148 billion this year. Since he was first elected, Mayoral funding has increased from 19% of the budget in 2016-17 to 25% in 2025-26.
5. However, in a challenging financial climate, the current Government and the Mayor can only go part way to addressing over a decade of underfunding of the Met by the previous

Government. Between 2010 and 2024, Home Office core funding of the Met increased by just 2% in cash terms (in real terms, this is a £1.1 billion reduction in funding).

6. The changes required for the Met to live within its budget will still be significant, changing the design of the Met's organisation to accommodate a reduced workforce strength across both officers and staff.
7. The tough choices are on top of delivering £100 million in efficiencies, building on the £1.2 billion of savings delivered since 2012, and reducing the Met's New Met for London (NMfL) reform budget.

Additional Funding Confirmed Since November's Draft Budget

8. As the Mayor's Final Draft Consolidated Budget 2025-26 sets out, the following additional funding has been confirmed for MOPAC since its Draft Budget in November:

Source	Detail	Amount	Note
Home Office Provisional Police Settlement 17 December 2024	Mayor's precept flexibility - recurrent	£25.2m	The Mayor took the decision in January 2025 to increase the police precept by the maximum permitted under government regulations.
	Changes in HO Core Grant including the new Neighbourhood Policing Grant (NPG) – assumed recurrent	£21.3m	The initial NPG received was £22.8m, partially off-set by changes in other sub-sections of the overall Home Office settlement. The NPG carries specific terms and conditions which continue to be worked through.
Note – the tough choices detailed in this document are based on the above additional funding only. The funding in the rows below, having been confirmed within the past 3 weeks at the point of publication, is still being considered and the Met's tough choices/ workforce projections will be revised as a result.			
Home Office doubling of NPG 30 January 2024	A tranche II of the NPG announced nationally – assumed recurrent	£22.8m	Tranche II is subject to the same terms and conditions as tranche I of the NPG. The Met continues to discuss with the HO the types of workforce cost that are eligible against this fund which could impact how/if this funding can be used in full.
Mayoral: increase in Council Tax base by 1% beyond estimate 6 February 2025	Council tax base increased by 2% (1% assumed in the Budget Guidance control totals) - recurrent	£10.4m	The use of this funding will be confirmed in the final MOPAC budget, to be approved by the Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime in March.
Home Office One Off Frontline Policing support 11 February 2025	Confirmed one-off £50m for police office strength from the Home Office	£50m	To note that this will be received in 2024/25 and held in a MOPAC reserve for use in future years. MOPAC is considering the Met's proposal on how this funding is used (whether across one or two financial years).
TOTAL		£129.7m	

9. In addition to the above, the Draft MOPAC Budget Submission 2025/26 had also assumed £85m additional income. This assumption materialised within the Home Office Provisional Police Settlement (separate to the items listed in the table above). This means that the Home Office has provided £281.2 million additional funding compared to 2024/25 (noting that whilst £50m has been provided in the 2024/25 financial year, it is to maintain officer numbers in future years).

The Tough Choices

10. The Met has considered carefully how to manage within its available budget, including the implications for its workforce. Rather than make blanket cuts to services, the Met has made strategic choices to protect its recent NMfL investments in response, neighbourhood policing and public protection. The Met is retaining the ability to undertake proactive and preventative activity – albeit not at the level desired.
11. The Met’s decision to protect neighbourhoods, public protection and proactive capabilities in line with NMfL means trade-offs in other areas, in which the changes will feel deeper.
12. The Met will change the design of some teams to rebalance their workforce ratio and release officers to frontline roles that only they can do. Whilst in the long-term this will not impact on the services the Met delivers, it may have a disruptive impact in the short term as the Met delivers this change and replaces officer roles with staff roles.
13. The Met’s current proposal on tough choices delivery is outlined below. The scale of a number of these proposals has been reduced since the initial version that underpinned the November draft budget submission. To stress, **this proposal is based on funding confirmed as at mid January 2025; subsequent funding of £83.2m has not been allocated** and may result in some of the items below not proceeding, or broader revisions to the Met’s ‘tough choices’ proposal.
14. Should other options be designed or considered later in the financial year, these will be communicated appropriately at the time.
15. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty outlined in Section 149 of the Equality Act, the Met as a public authority must have due regard to:
 - a. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
 - b. to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
16. Full equality implications of each tough choice proposal will be considered through an Equality Impact Assessment once each proposal is finalised.
17. The Met’s current proposal on tough choices is:

A. Public Order and Contact

- Part civilianise the Met Contact Centre and Public Order Planning
Whilst in the long-term this will not impact on services the Met delivers, it will see officers replaced by staff. There will be a short-term resilience risk while new staff are trained and gain experience. While this provides a saving for these services, as civilianisation is currently un-funded, the Met will need to make compensating reductions elsewhere.

B. Met Intelligence Command and Covert Policing (MO2, MO3)

- A reduction in Intelligence; whilst limited, this proposal will reduce analytical capability in local policing, thereby reducing the Met's tactical and strategic analysis to support hot-spots and offenders. An Intelligence Team focused exclusively on financial, crypto, dark-web and money laundering will be removed.
- A limited reduction in covert policing relative to Specialist Crime, reducing the volume of sensitive intelligence in the Met.
- Part civilianise Intelligence.

C. Met Taskforce (MO7)

- A limited reduction of the Dogs unit
- A limited reduction of the Mounted branch
These are proposed reductions in specialist skills and capabilities supporting frontline policing, requiring a reprioritisation of assets/ resources, and stronger tasking and coordination.
Reducing the Dogs unit capability will entail upskilling the remaining workforce; this may require a period of abstraction, reducing the resilience of the service.
Reducing Mounted branch would reduce visible policing of select operations, potentially requiring an increase in foot patrols or local resources.
- A reduction of taskforce proactive teams / interceptors, specialist resources supporting frontline policing in targeting serious threats and priorities, potentially leading to extended investigations.

D. Front Line Policing – serious violence/ crime

- Reduction of capacity for investigations of Historic Crime
The Met will reduce its capacity to undertake historic or legacy investigations/ reviews. To manage incoming demand it will assess cases and referrals using a specific set of gateway criteria. This will take into account proportionate use of resources, specialist skills, costs, timelines and potential judicial outcome.
- Reduction of proactive capacity for serious violence and serious organised crime (SOC)
This reduces the capacity to investigate proactively across the SOC Control Strategy, meaning less activity against threat types such as Firearms, Drugs, Knife Crime, Serious Violence, Robbery and Fraud. This will mean proportionately less SOC disruptions and an increase in activity that goes unchecked.

- Part-civilianise Specialist Crime and Major Investigation Teams.
- E. Front Line Policing – Basic Command Units
 - Remove Royal Parks Operational Command Unit
The demand currently met by Royal Parks will be incorporated into the local BCUs for the parks in their areas, however there will be a reduction in visible policing within the parks and reduced local / specialist knowledge (such as on parks events and legislation). The Met will consider how other internal teams or external partners can support to mitigate this reduction.
 - Remove Youth Engagement and Diversion officers (YEDOs). As part of the Met’s operating model for youth-based neighbourhood policing the Met has identified that the role of YEDOs do not meet the requirements of a core policing purpose and are not visible to communities. The overall changes across youth-based neighbourhood policing (which in addition to YEDOs includes volunteer police cadets and safer schools officers) will result in over 380 posts being embedded into neighbourhood ward teams.
- F. Specialist Firearms
 - A limited reduction by consolidating un-armed resources within M019.
Delivery against the Firearms Culture Programme will be compromised as this the delivery is being led by un-armed officers.
- G. Back Office
 - Reduction of the Frontline Policing Delivery Unit and realigning core operational safeguarding and protection functions.
This will reduce policy and continuous improvement services into BCUs including:
 - The capacity for policy and inspections for Use of Force, Stop and Search, Officer Safety and Op Hampshire
 - The capacity of Tactical and Policy Advisors who seek to drive improvements to prevent crimes, reduce harm, build confidence and reduced demand by enhancing service delivery and mitigating risk across operational areas.
 - Local HQ – support to frontline operations
Local enabling services are delivered by operational officers. If this work is to be transferred to existing support staff at stations, and a further reduction in support staff is applied, service provision will need to be changed due to the reduction in staff e.g. services being stopped, reduced in scope, moved to be delivered centrally, or moved to self-service.

Police Officer Strength

18. The Met had expected to end the 2024-25 year at an officer strength of 32,452 FTE.

19. The Met's budget proposal in November which informed the Draft MOPAC Budget Submission 2025-26 assumed a net reduction of 1,899 officers. This would've led to a total officer strength of 30,553 at March 2026.
20. Based on funding confirmed as at mid January 2025 (£25.2m additional Mayoral precept, and £21.3m increased Home Office Core Grant comprising largely the NPG), the Met revised its projection to a net reduction of 1,479 (an improvement of 22%) resulting in a revised closing strength at March 2026 of 30,973 FTE.
21. The Met is now working through the implications on police officer strength of the recently confirmed £83.2m additional funding. This exercise requires assessment of a number of factors, including:
 - a. The terms and conditions of the NPG (for example, whether it is an acceptable use of this grant to roll forward unspent funds to future financial years as any part-year recruitment will result in part-year use of funds; and whether civilianisation costs are eligible for claiming against this grant)
 - b. The re-design of tough choices that may be required given additional funding
 - c. The most suitable balance between optimising police officer numbers against a proportionate increase in staff numbers, and non-workforce costs to support frontline delivery.
 - d. The period over which the funding – in particular the one-off £50m fund from the Home Office – will be spent.
22. At the end of the above work, this additional funding will be allocated to fund more police officers, police staff and the supplies and services they need to perform their roles. It will not be spent entirely on police officers, and the Met continues to target a ratio of two police officers per member of staff (consistent with other forces). However it is clear that it will fund at least several hundred officers above the numbers set out in paragraph 20 (on top of the 420 additional officers secured through previously announced funding).
23. The figures above relate to the total number of MPS officers. Of these, as of March 2026 5,841 are expected to be assigned to activity funded separately, for example counter-terrorism policing or aviation policing. This will leave a total of 25,132 officers for allocating to general policing (based on the confirmed numbers in paragraph 20 above).
24. As part of these proposals, it is expected that a further 400 officers will be transferred from general to externally-funded policing (ending March 2026 at 5,841 officers on externally funded activity, having started the year at 5,441).
25. Based on funding confirmed as at mid January 2025, the Met anticipate ending March 2026 with 10,882 staff. This will increase, partly because any additional police officer strength from additional funding will require a proportionate increase in staff.