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Neil Garratt AM
Chairman of the Budget and Performance Committee

Kaya Comer-Schwartz
Deputy Mayor of Policing and Crime
MOPAC.
(Sent by email)

19 November 2026

Dear Deputy Mayor,

Police benchmarking

The Budget and Performance Committee met Professor Matt Ashby and Professor Ben Bradford from University College London, Ian Wiggett from World Policing Advisory and Dr Simon Guilfoyle, a former police officer and author, on 20 October 2026 to examine how benchmarking can be used to support police performance assessment, resource allocation and budget setting.

Focus on the business of policing

The Committee heard that benchmarking policing performance should extend beyond crime rates and recorded crime outcomes to include the wider "*business of policing*" and the services that police forces provide to the public on a day-to-day basis. Ian Wiggett told the Committee that "*The business of policing is reducing crime, locking up criminals, detecting crime, and getting successful convictions*" and that crime only accounted for 30 to 40 per cent of police work.[1]

Dr Simon Guilfoyle explained that focusing exclusively on crime statistics risks overlooking how effectively forces respond to calls for service, investigate offences, support victims and manage the demands placed upon them. He said "*we need to look a lot wider, including at input and various conditions within policing systems, which will tell us about the health of the system, its*

[1] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P3, 20 October 2026

effectiveness and the opportunities to improve the policing system."[2] He also stated that crime levels are influenced by a wide range of social, economic and demographic factors, many of which sit outside the direct control of police forces. This could be addressed by placing greater emphasis on operational measures that more directly reflect police performance and organisational effectiveness.[3]

The Committee heard that benchmarking is most useful when used to identify questions and learning opportunities rather than to produce simplistic rankings. Professor Matt Ashby said "*If you look over a longer trend, you can get a much richer picture that can lead you to ask the right questions about police performance*".[4] He also suggested using multiple comparator cities saying "*comparing against a basket of other cities is more useful than just comparing against one because it allows you to ask those questions. Why did this happen here, but it did not happen in any of the similar cities elsewhere?"*[5] **MOPAC should explore the potential to use benchmarking of operational measures that more directly reflect police performance and organisational effectiveness as a learning and diagnostic tool, focusing on trends rather than rankings. We ask that MOPAC sets out what its current approach is to benchmarking operational measures as well as any plans it has in this area in its response to this letter.**

Trust and Legitimacy

The Committee heard from Professor Ben Bradford that the ability of the police to prevent crime, solve offences and maintain public safety depends heavily on public confidence, cooperation and willingness to engage with the police. He particularly highlighted legitimacy as a foundational component of police effectiveness, rather than merely an outcome to be measured alongside other metrics.[6]

Professor Ben Bradford compared levels today to those in the 1960s when trust was very high despite "*Policing in the early 1960s, even by the standards of the time, was racist, misogynistic, homophobic, and corrupt*." He confirmed that public trust has more recently declined and stated that "*It is one of the paradoxes that we have at the moment: trust has declined over a period where, in many ways, policing has got better."* [7] Ian Wiggett explained that "*The MPS has some of the lowest trust and confidence levels in the country and, really, it should not.*"[8]

Professor Ben Bradford informed the Committee that "*one of the most consistent drivers of trust is visibility*."[9] When police are visible in communities, people perceive them as available and engaged with local concerns; conversely, a lack of visibility can lead residents to feel that police do not care about their area.[10] The Committee heard that people are more likely to cooperate with police if they think police are effective, if they have confidence in them and if they think that police are trustworthy. Professor Ben Bradford stated that *"It [community outreach] does improve the*

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[2] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P4, 20 October 2026
[3] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P4, 20 October 2026
[4] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P6, 20 October 2026
[5] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P12, 20 October 2026
[6] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P16, 20 October 2026
[7] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P16, 20 October 2026
[8] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P18, 20 October 2026
[9] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P14, 20 October 2026
[10] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P14, 20 October 2026

flow of information from the community. It does build trust. It does mean people are more likely to come forward."[11]

Ian Wiggett highlighted that victims' experiences with police are particularly important. He said:

> "*As resources and the criminal justice system come under pressure, the detection rates have slipped. Forces are now starting to recognise that that is one of the fundamental things that the public and victims of crime expect that the police are going to turn up and try to do their best to detect the crime*."[12]

Professor Matt Ashby noted the tension between the need to investigate less visible but high impact crimes like sexual assaults and online fraud with greater back office work and the desire to have neighbourhood policing.[13]

This expert evidence suggests legitimacy is shaped through local interactions between the public and the police. Factors such as neighbourhood visibility, procedural fairness, responsiveness, community engagement and victims' experiences all play an important role in determining whether members of the public view the police as trustworthy and effective. Professor Ben Bradford highlighted that only a minority of Londoners have direct contact with police each year,[14] so those interactions disproportionately shape trust and confidence. **The Committee would welcome further information on how victim experience and victim satisfaction are incorporated into MOPAC's performance framework. MOPAC should also assess the effectiveness of its use of operational performance measures that capture public trust and legitimacy, particularly neighbourhood policing, victim care and community engagement.**

The Committee heard from Professor Ben Bradford that measures of trust, confidence and legitimacy provide valuable intelligence about how communities experience policing, but should not necessarily be treated as performance targets. Rather, these measures should be used to identify emerging concerns, monitor trends over time and inform operational and policy responses.[15] **The Committee would welcome details of how MOPAC currently uses trust and confidence measures to inform decision-making in response to this letter and whether additional borough-level analysis is planned.**

Workforce

The Committee heard that maintaining effective neighbourhood policing, achieving an appropriate workforce mix, and aligning resources with operational demand are important considerations for the effective performance of the Metropolitan Police Service. Both Ian Wiggett and Professor Matt Ashby stressed the value of policing at neighbourhood level rather than relying solely on larger command structures.[16] Ian raised the risk of embedded local resources being abstracted.[17] MOPAC should continue to prioritise investment in neighbourhood policing, including the retention and development of locally embedded officers and Police Community Support Officers,

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[11] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P17, 20 October 2026
[12] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P3, 20 October 2026
[13] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P15, 20 October 2026
[14] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P14, 20 October 2026
[15] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P14, 20 October 2026
[16] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P17-18, 20 October 2026
[17] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P17, 20 October 2026

and ensure that visibility and community engagement remain central features of the policing model and protect these resources from abstraction. **The Committee would like to see details of the current level of neighbourhood policing teams and how this compares to each of the last five years as well as abstraction rates for these neighbourhood policing teams over the same timescale and any plans to strengthen safeguards that protect neighbourhood officers and PCSOs from routine redeployment to other duties.**

The Committee also heard that police forces need a better understanding of demand and capacity Dr Simon Guilfoyle said:

> "*I am not convinced that many forces […] in the UK have a sufficient enough understanding of demand versus capacity. How many people we actually need and how we effectively prioritise to ensure the most basic of police functions, that when somebody calls 999 and needs a cop to get there quickly, help them, do the right thing, and spend sufficient time with them*."[18]

The Committee heard from Ian Wiggett that police officers are increasingly undertaking work that specialist civilian staff previously performed.[19] Professor Matt Ashby argued that hollowing out support functions makes policing both less effective and more expensive.[20] **We recommend that MOPAC consider the balance between warranted officers and specialist staff when developing the 2027-28 Budget and set out the details of its approach in its budget submission**.

Use of technology

Advances in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) present opportunities to improve operational effectiveness, reduce administrative burdens and support better decision-making. The Committee heard from Professor Matt Ashby that research on the effectiveness policing AI tools has shown mixed results and highlighted that policing currently lacks a strong evidence base regarding the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of AI applications. He also highlighted that evaluation is often treated as an afterthought rather than being built into procurement and implementation from the outset.[21]

The Committee heard from Professor Matt Ashby that police forces have struggled with technology investment on fragmented systems and with data held across multiple platforms that result in limitations in system interoperability which can reduce efficiency, hinder intelligence-sharing and increase reliance on manual processes. He highlighted that greater integration of systems and information is essential if policing is to make full use of digital technologies and emerging analytical tools.[22] **The Committee recommends that MOPAC explains how it evaluates the impacts, effectiveness and value for money of AI and other modern data analysis tools and what capabilities it has added to be able to do this.**

Locality

The Committee heard from Professor Matt Ashby that crime is highly localised and heavily

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[18] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P19-20, 20 October 2026
[19] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P18, 20 October 2026
[20] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P20, 20 October 2026
[21] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P10, 20 October 2026
[22] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P9, 20 October 2026

concentrated. He told the Committee that "*Within London there are low and high crime boroughs, but within the highest crime borough there are low and high crime clusters. Within that there are low and high crime wards, and within that there are low and high crime streets."* He explained that the more local you can be the more effective you are likely to be in responding to crime problems.[23] Any city-wide averages can mask significant local differences and may provide an incomplete picture of policing performance. **The Committee would like to understand what street, neighbourhood, ward-cluster and borough-level performance measures are routinely monitored by MOPAC, and how this information is used to identify local variations in performance and inform resource allocation decisions. We ask that you share information on this in your response to this letter.**

The Committee would welcome your response by 2 December 2026 to inform the Committee's consideration of the MOPAC draft 2027-28 budget.

Yours,



Neil Garratt AM
Chairman of the Budget and Performance Committee

[23] Budget and Performance Committee, transcript, P17-18, 20 October 2026