

## Safer Neighbourhood Boards

August 2013



# Police and Crime Committee Members

Joanne McCartney (Chair)	Labour
Jennette Arnold	Labour
John Biggs	Labour
Len Duvall	Labour
Tony Arbour	Conservative
Victoria Borwick	Conservative
Roger Evans	Conservative
Jenny Jones (Deputy Chair)	Green
Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair)	Liberal Democrat

## Role of Police and Crime 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 that it considers to be of importance to policing and crime reduction in Greater London and make recommendations for improvements.

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## Foreword

The rapid changes taking place in London's policing landscape present challenges and risks to the ways the Metropolitan Police and MOPAC engages with Londoners. Reform of governance structures, police strategies, and the increasingly complex nature of crime prevention work require a highly effective form of community engagement. These changes also represent an opportunity to re-examine the role local people can play in influencing policing and holding their local police to account.



In April 2014, MOPAC will replace the current network of Community and Police Engagement Groups with Safer Neighbourhood Boards. These Boards are an attempt to wed traditional community engagement with a broader range of duties including police complaints monitoring, giving a voice to victims and delivering crime prevention work. Safer Neighbourhood Boards are a unique proposal, and not without ambition. In our discussions, the Committee has heard that there is some merit in reforming current community engagement structures.

Unfortunately, it appears this promise risks being compromised by poor planning, confused communication and inadequate funding. With less than a year to go, MOPAC cannot say with any clarity what role it expects Boards to play, who should sit on them and how it will ensure their effectiveness.

This report highlights fundamental questions that MOPAC need to address to ensure that the network which replaces CPEGs is fit for purpose. The Mayor must demonstrate that he understands the value of community engagement by providing clearer and more detailed guidance to partners and ensure that they are funded adequately.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. McCartney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**Joanne McCartney AM**  
**Chair of the Police and Crime Committee**

# 1. Introduction

Major changes are being planned to how Londoners engage with and influence their local police service. These changes have not previously been the subject of public scrutiny, despite the potentially significant effect they have on community engagement, victim support and crime reduction.

In April 2014, the Mayor will launch a new network of borough-based Safer Neighbourhood Boards. First announced in the Mayor's manifesto in March 2012,<sup>1</sup> Safer Neighbourhood Boards are intended to:

- Improve the quality and consistency of engagement across London;
- Ensure that community engagement structures better reflect the diversity of the communities they serve;
- Carry out a wider range of legislative and consultative duties;
- Deliver crime reduction projects; and
- Contribute towards MOPAC's overall cost reductions.

Safer Neighbourhood Boards will replace the current Community and Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs). Though funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), CPEGs are independent, largely volunteer-run forums whose primary focus is on providing a liaison between the police and the public.

Current community engagement structures have, in some cases, been operating in London for nearly three decades. CPEGs were first proposed by Lord Scarman, following his report on the 1981 Brixton Riots. Lord Scarman identified a major collapse in the relationship between the police and local communities as contributing to the build-up of tensions prior to the riots.<sup>2</sup> This collapse in relations meant the police were unprepared for the ferocity of the riots, and that there was no mechanism to help the police communicate effectively with local people to quell the violence.<sup>3</sup> A breakdown in communication between police and local communities is common to some of the biggest policing disputes over the last two decades, including the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the disproportionate use of stop and search on BME communities and the riots following the shooting of Mark Duggan in 2011.

Initially, community engagement structures were funded by the MPS,<sup>4</sup> but the funding and management of CPEGs was taken over by the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) in 2000. The MPA maintained the independence of CPEGs, but sought to bring more professionalism and accountability to their operations. This culminated in a large-scale review in 2007/2008, which introduced Service Level Agreements outlining the activities each CPEG was expected to undertake annually<sup>5</sup> and specific requirements around the diversity of CPEG membership. In January 2012, MOPAC took control of the CPEG network and has continued to fund it under similar terms.<sup>6</sup>

While community engagement has changed in the years since the Scarman Report, the independence of its structures has always been a central feature. Independence - that is with a membership drawn from the local community and independent of police and police authorities - was viewed as crucial to ensuring the credibility of engagement, and helping to ensure that the police would properly be held to account. This, in turn, helped to maintain public confidence in the police.

The Committee would like to put on record its appreciation for the important work that CPEGs have undertaken over the last three decades. At their best, CPEGs provide a vital link from the public to the police, helping to set local priorities and give communities greater ownership of crime reduction policies. They have thus played a critical role in the development of neighbourhood policing. CPEGs have also been at the forefront of helping to identify and monitor issues such as stop and search, as well as helping to trial and run innovative crime reduction measures. They provide some of the earliest examples of broad partnership working within boroughs, which has become central in a range of other areas.

Despite this, there is clearly scope for change, particularly to account for the new operational policing and governance structures brought into effect by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act. Worrying differences have also developed between boroughs: while many have strong community engagement bodies with deep local roots, some boroughs are without recognised function structures.<sup>7</sup>

Looking ahead to the creation of Safer Neighbourhood Boards, this report is a response to a number of concerns that we have discussed in detail with representatives of CPEGs, MOPAC, the MPS and an expert in volunteer management and recruitment.<sup>8</sup> The following sections explore the plans put forward by the Mayor under three broad headings:

1. Safer Neighbourhood Boards' functions – whether MOPAC has given sufficient information and guidance on the range of functions Safer Neighbourhood Boards will be expected to deliver
2. Governance of Safer Neighbourhood Boards – the form Boards are likely to take and who should sit on them
3. Resourcing Safer Neighbourhood Boards – whether MOPAC is providing sufficient financial and staff resources to ensure Boards are properly established and able to carry out their duties

The Committee has made recommendations with a view to improving this process for all stakeholders, and ensuring that Safer Neighbourhood Boards are fit for purpose when they are launched next year.

## 2. Safer Neighbourhood Board Functions

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**Safer Neighbourhood Boards are an attempt to marry community engagement between local people and the police with a range of new responsibilities, some of which are delegated directly from the Mayor. However, these new responsibilities are as yet poorly defined and it is not possible to determine the potential effect they might have on the vital engagement work which currently takes place at borough and ward level.**

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The decision to replace CPEGs with Safer Neighbourhood Boards was first announced by the Mayor in his Crime Manifesto in March 2012. The Manifesto listed several key functions that Boards would be expected to carry out in addition to current community engagement activity.<sup>9</sup> This list was expanded in a letter from MOPAC to local authority Chief Executives in September 2012. The letter confirmed that there would be no consultation about the range of duties, which were viewed as manifesto commitments, but that individual conversations with boroughs would take place about how the proposals could be implemented.<sup>10</sup>

The Committee has identified several concerns about the range of duties outlined by MOPAC. The table in Appendix 2 highlights specific concerns about individual functions but, broadly, we have found that:

- **There is a lack of detail in the proposals.** Despite Safer Neighbourhood Boards being announced over 16 months ago, MOPAC appears not to have given sufficient thought to how some of the more complex tasks will be carried out. When we put questions to MOPAC's adviser on neighbourhoods, Steve O'Connell AM, he acknowledged that MOPAC still had more work to do in several areas.<sup>11</sup> This essentially means that CPEGs and other borough partners are expected to present proposals for Safer Neighbourhood Boards to MOPAC without expected duties being clearly defined.
- **The Deputy Mayor has suggested that some of the ten functions may be voluntary.** It is not yet clear how much freedom Boards will have to determine what should be prioritised, and how those should be progressed. In order to ensure some consistency, MOPAC will need to be clearer about what circumstances it would allow Safer Neighbourhood Boards to 'op-out' of any function, and whether Boards will be able to discuss some topics less frequently in order to focus on local priorities.



- **The current list of functions is unlikely to reduce duplication of activity.** The Mayor has previously said that the introduction of Safer Neighbourhood Boards would reduce the amount of duplication of community engagement and crime prevention activities within boroughs. The Mayor’s manifesto and MOPAC’s follow-up letter said that the merging of borough Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and CPEGs would be the main way of reducing this complexity.<sup>12</sup> However, the Committee has subsequently learned that IAGs will remain separate.<sup>13</sup> Though the Committee welcomes maintaining the independence of IAGs, this change casts doubt on a central rationale for the introduction of Safer Neighbourhood Boards.
- **The process for consultation and development of Safer Neighbourhood Boards has been held largely behind closed doors.** This has made it difficult for members of the public to engage with changes that will directly affect them, and for us to hold the Mayor and MOPAC accountable for their decisions.
- **Confusion around functions has led to a relatively disorganised transition period.** MOPAC has said it is carrying out “32 individual conversations” with boroughs as to how Safer Neighbourhood Boards will be implemented.<sup>14</sup> However, the lack of an agreed list of functions or clarity about how they should be carried out is undermining the ability of stakeholders to draw up effective Safer Neighbourhood Board proposals. Martin Davis, a representative of LCP2 (an umbrella organisation of CPEGs) told us he was concerned that stakeholders did not have a clear idea of what MOPAC expected of them. When asked what MOPAC needed to do to make the process more successful, he said:<sup>15</sup>

*“There are ten functions. Each one of those functions is going to have to be clearly identified. A success will be that we actually know what is intended and then we have a clearly understood range of achievements which are committed to by MOPAC so that we can judge that they have actually achieved success. The success itself is going to be that Safer Neighbourhood Board functions are fully and appropriately undertaken but we cannot tell what that is going to be until we actually know what they are going to be doing.”*

An example of the confusion over some of the Board’s functions is the duty to “hear and monitor complaints from victims.”<sup>16</sup> MOPAC had previously given conflicting messages on its view of this issue. The duty to hear from victims was, from the start, identified by the Mayor as a key feature of Safer Neighbourhood Boards, a position re-iterated by MOPAC’s advisor on neighbourhoods at our meeting on 13 June. At that

meeting, MOPAC said that Boards would provide a regular forum for individual victims to air issues and complaints. LCP2 said this would place significant additional responsibilities on Boards, both to provide the support necessary for victims as well as potential legal advice on contentious issues.<sup>17</sup> Following our evidence session, Martin Davis said he attended a meeting on 26 June with MOPAC's advisor during which he understood that the duty on victims was being removed. When questioned by the Committee on 27 June, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime did not appear to be aware of this discussion or that concerns had been raised and re-stated the original duty as outlined in the Mayor's manifesto.

The Committee is pleased that, following its evidential sessions MOPAC has now clarified its proposals on this issue. In a letter to the Committee on 29 July, MOPAC's advisor on neighbourhoods stated "as the Committee recognised it would not be helpful for the Boards to simply be a forum to publicly complain about individual matters, the approach will be more focussed and structured". MOPAC would expect Boards to monitor trends in victims' data, promote and publicise access to the system and include victim representation on the Boards to provide specific insights and knowledge. Occasionally certain victims' concerns may be discussed at Board meetings.<sup>18</sup> The Committee felt that under this duty the concerns of victims whose crime had been screened out of a proper investigation should also be considered. While this clarity is welcome, MOPAC must communicate this to all groups who are seeking to establish a Safer Neighbourhood Board and must give appropriate guidance as to how this sensitive and complex function will be delivered.

Looking forward, it will not be possible to monitor or evaluate Safer Neighbourhood Boards effectively without properly defined functions. Since 2008/2009, CPEGs have had Service Level Agreements, initially with the MPA, and now currently with MOPAC. These provide a mechanism whereby CPEGs can be assessed against an agreed set of criteria and held to maintain standards regarding the diversity of their membership and the level of engagement with local communities. MOPAC's adviser on neighbourhoods has suggested that Safer Neighbourhood Boards will require a similar arrangement with MOPAC,<sup>19</sup> but that will require tighter definitions of each function and a better understanding of what Boards are capable of within each borough.

Finally, perhaps the most important concern raised during the Committee's work is the effect that the change in priorities from CPEGs to Safer Neighbourhood Boards might have on community engagement, which should arguably be the primary purpose of these structures. CPEGs are worried that the additional responsibilities being placed on Boards will lead to less active work in local communities, and thus undermine the

police's ability to solve crime and the public's confidence in their work.<sup>20</sup> Some CPEGs have even indicated a desire to continue running in parallel with Safer Neighbourhood Boards to ensure that community engagement remains a priority within the borough.<sup>21</sup>

**Given these concerns, we conclude that the present proposal for Safer Neighbourhood Boards does not yet represent a comprehensible plan for how community engagement in London can be developed and improved. This lack of clarity on basic issues is feeding confusion among local partners and stakeholders and reducing the likelihood of a successful launch of the network in April 2014.**

**Recommendation 1**

**MOPAC needs to urgently provide clearer guidance to those looking to set up Safer Neighbourhood Boards. As a Mayoral initiative, it is incumbent on MOPAC to clarify to CPEG and borough partners what Boards are expected to do and how.**

**Recommendation 2**

**By October 2013, MOPAC should write to the Committee confirming:**

- Which of the initial ten responsibilities will be required of each Safer Neighbourhood Board.**
- What MOPAC expects from each Board in order to successfully carry out each duty.**
- How MOPAC will monitor and evaluate each duty**
- How it has communicated this information to those looking to set up Safer Neighbourhood Boards.**

### 3. Governance of Safer Neighbourhood Boards

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**There is currently no agreed model for Safer Neighbourhood Boards. We understand the importance of letting local groups make their own decisions. MOPAC wants to allow flexibility to reflect local circumstances and avoid being too prescriptive. But, as the driver of their creation, it is incumbent on MOPAC to ensure that Boards are set up with appropriate structures and accountabilities to deliver the unique mix of community engagement, Mayoral duties and local monitoring of police performance that is expected. There is a concern that the intended flexibility may compromise some of these priorities.**

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MOPAC has not said what Safer Neighbourhood Boards should look like and this "hands-off approach" is leading to confusion among some key local partners. A representative of LCP2 said MOPAC had yet to fully communicate its expectations to stakeholders leading to wide variation in how boroughs are approaching the formation of Boards in their areas. While many Boards are likely to mirror existing CPEG structures, this may not be sufficient to handle complex new duties around victims, police complaint monitoring and Community Payback.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, it appears that MOPAC has not adopted a consistent approach in its consultation with boroughs, running the risk that key local partners will be missed.

MOPAC does not intend to specify who should be on Safer Neighbourhood Boards. The Mayor had previously committed to Safer Neighbourhood Boards being more reflective of local communities, having better participation from young people, and having term limits on Board membership of three years to encourage a "regular rotation of views".<sup>23</sup> However, there is a tension between these aspirations and MOPAC's policy of leaving major decisions up to borough partners. MOPAC's adviser on neighbourhoods acknowledged it was likely that this policy would lead to Boards populated with representatives from existing stakeholder organisations, rather than other local people. This risks undermining the objective of Boards to attract new volunteers and may not deliver the desired improvement over the existing CPEG structure. Additionally, MOPAC must avoid a situation where Boards simply mirror existing borough-based organisations such as Crime Reduction Partnerships.

The current approach could entrench differences in the effectiveness of local structures between boroughs. A major criticism of the current CPEG network is a lack of consistency: while some boroughs have strong groups

with decades of experience and strong local connections, others do not have a functioning body at all. Such differences would be even more problematic for Safer Neighbourhood Boards because of the important additional duties the Boards are being asked to undertake. Providing more direction on how Safer Neighbourhood Boards should look and who should sit on them could both help to ensure more effective policing engagement structures across London, and allow Londoners to evaluate their local arrangements against a template to see whether improvements could be made. It would also assist the areas that do not have existing strong structures and who are finding it more difficult to put together effective plans for new Safer Neighbourhood Boards.

MOPAC should also explain its strategic relationship with Safer Neighbourhood Boards to show how they can maintain their day to day independence. The Deputy Mayor told the Committee his relationship with Boards is that of a funder, but it seems to us that their expected function implies a more active role. A key purpose of Safer Neighbourhood Boards is to act as a link between MOPAC and boroughs. Boards will be undertaking some tasks on behalf of the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor will also approve each Board proposal, including membership details.<sup>24</sup> This represents a substantial shift from the current independent CPEG network and suggests that MOPAC will be closer to the day-to-day operations of Safer Neighbourhood Boards. MOPAC has said it is likely to continue the practice of having Service Level Agreements to monitor funding,<sup>25</sup> but it will also need to show how this closer relationship will work in practice and how it can guarantee independence in on-going community engagement activity. The Committee understands that MOPAC may still be attempting to determine where best it should exercise control in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Board network, but it needs to be clearer about its thinking and priorities.

To improve the transparency and accountability of the process, MOPAC should publish the local agreements it reaches on each Safer Neighbourhood Board. The Deputy Mayor has said that there will be no consultation on the design of Boards.<sup>26</sup> As a minimum, MOPAC should publish the agreed proposal for each borough's Board so that MOPAC, the Mayor and the Boards themselves can be held to account by local people.

**MOPAC should help to alleviate any confusion among borough stakeholders by being clearer about the type of organisational structures it expects in Safer Neighbourhood Board proposals. It should also be clearer about the process for how Safer Neighbourhood Boards are being established. This will allow Londoners to determine if the structures being proposed are fit for purpose and are likely to be more representative.**

**Recommendation 3**

**By October 2013, MOPAC should write to the Committee outlining in greater detail:**

- What Safer Neighbourhood Boards' basic structure could look like in order to fulfil the functions outlined in Section 2, recognising that MOPAC wants to leave some room for Boards to reflect local circumstances**
- Expectations about the Membership of Boards, how they can ensure they are comprehensively representative of the communities they serve, and whether term limits will still be placed on membership.**

**Recommendation 4**

**As the Deputy Mayoral for Policing and Crime signs off on each Board proposal, he should publish a Deputy Mayor Decision setting out the agreed proposal and his reasons for granting approval to each structure.**

## 4. Resourcing Safer Neighbourhood Boards

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**Safer Neighbourhood Boards will need the right resources to fulfil their responsibilities. We believe MOPAC's current funding proposal could put at risk the establishment of the new structure and delivery of its objectives by not providing sufficient funds for core costs. Final decisions on funding cannot be taken before functions and structures are clarified, but they need to be clearly based on getting the best value for public money, not simply on spending less. Proper funding of Board member costs is particularly important given the potential challenges of recruiting and retaining volunteers.**

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MOPAC intends to launch Safer Neighbourhood Boards with annual funding of £5,200 for each Board.<sup>27</sup> The Deputy Mayor said this would fund eight to ten hours of administration support per week at the London Living Wage. From this, Safer Neighbourhood Boards will apparently be expected to recruit, train and manage volunteers, coordinate a programme of public meetings, carry out the range of duties, and bid for funding for crime prevention projects. The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime confirmed that there would also be some level of staff support from MOPAC to each Board, although was not clear at this stage what kind of support this would be.<sup>28</sup>

The evidence heard by the Committee suggests that this support is unlikely to be adequate. Jamie Wilcox, Director of Volunteer Services at Great Ormond Street Hospital, a representative of LCP2, and some CPEG Chairs have all questioned MOPAC's assumptions on what can be delivered for £5,200. Mr Wilcox said that recruitment and support of volunteers alone could cost more than that figure before any meetings or other projects. Guests also questioned how MOPAC was able to determine a figure for costs without an agreed model for how Boards will look and what duties they will carry out.<sup>29</sup>

£5,200 represents a 60 to 80 per cent cut on current levels of CPEG funding, which is £35,000-50,000 in some cases.<sup>30</sup> MOPAC believes these savings can be met through further reductions in overheads without affecting the delivery of Safer Neighbourhood Board functions. Representatives of CPEGs have argued that after five years of budget reductions there is little additional to cut, and that MOPAC seems to misunderstand what exactly CPEGs spend their 'overheads' on. Typical

overheads include basic support for meetings and volunteers, at most one admin support worker (who is often part-time), and events designed to help reach marginalised groups or communities. All of which are also likely to be essential for Boards. Suggestions that Boards should ask community contacts to donate meeting space and look to reduce staffing levels have already been done by many CPEGs to meet previous budgetary constraints.

Safer Neighbourhood Boards may have trouble accessing external funding. MOPAC has suggested that Boards should be funded by other borough partners or external funders such as trusts or national government. MOPAC's adviser on neighbourhoods said that CPEGs had shown some success in attracting other funding sources, and that MOPAC expected boroughs to help ensure that Safer Neighbourhood Boards are adequately resourced. However, despite some previous success by CPEGs in attracting external funding, many CPEGs now have no other source of income beyond MOPAC, and boroughs and other stakeholders have not indicated that they are willing to increase the level of support they already offer. We have also heard that it may be more difficult or impossible for Safer Neighbourhood Boards to gain charitable status – as some CPEGs have done to help access external funding – because they will be seen as connected to MOPAC rather than independent.<sup>31</sup> Even if granted, becoming a limited company or charity would carry additional administrative and legal responsibilities, such as the cost and time needed to submit audited accounts annually, as well as making Board volunteers legally liable for the Board's activities.<sup>32</sup>

MOPAC could address this potential funding shortfall by rethinking how much it will contribute towards the core costs of Boards. At present, MOPAC intends to make around £1 million available for Safer Neighbourhood Boards in the next financial year. As it stands, it will use about £160,000 for running costs and the remainder to establish a "borough problem solving fund" to provide grants to Boards to deliver specific crime reduction projects.<sup>33</sup> We consider that the core funding is not adequate to establish a viable Board network, and that MOPAC should revisit its funding proposal to ensure a viable Board in every borough with a sustainable pool of skilled volunteers. We note that if there is not enough funding to launch a successful network, Boards are unlikely to be able to deliver high quality crime reduction projects through the borough problem solving fund anyway.

### *Volunteers*

In order to deliver more complex work for less cost, Safer Neighbourhood Boards will rely heavily on volunteers. Many CPEGs carry out a range of duties in addition to their community engagement functions but none



carry out quite the mix of local engagement, police monitoring, victim services and crime reduction activity outlined by MOPAC for Safer Neighbourhood Boards. This will largely be undertaken by people giving their time for free.

Volunteering roles are likely to be challenging and may need a more extensive recruitment and support structure than MOPAC has planned. The expanded work programme expected of Safer Neighbourhood Boards will place significant demands on volunteers' time, with Board members needing to commit to working outside of public meetings in order to meet their obligations. This intensive activity will reduce the pool of available volunteers.

Volunteers will also need reassurance that proper legal protections and indemnities are in place to allow them to carry out sensitive responsibilities. As an illustration, the Committee heard from LCP2 that:

*“Quite clearly, there will be issues around indemnity insurance if you are going to be hearing victims of crime making complaints. I cannot overemphasise the importance of ensuring that there is adequate support given to victims which is both emotionally supportive and legally supportive if we are going to be seeing Safer Neighbourhood Board embark on that area of work”*

Though the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime told the Committee that he had received legal advice that volunteers would not need to be indemnified, it is not clear under what basis this advice was given. MOPAC has also yet to communicate the advice to those who are working to establish Safer Neighbourhood Boards.

The Committee has also heard that there is a shrinking pool of available volunteers generally, particularly for this kind of specialised and demanding role. Mr Wilcox told us that it was increasingly difficult to find volunteers in the current economic climate so it takes time and money to attract the right applicants.<sup>34</sup>

Failure to adequately support volunteers initially could have serious future consequences. An inability to recruit and sustain appropriate Board members risks the credibility of Safer Neighbourhood Boards with local people, particularly in boroughs that do not already have a strong community engagement structure. A 'churn' of volunteers will also make it harder for Boards to carry out important monitoring functions as expertise and institutional memory is lost. The financial burden of constant recruitment and training would also affect the ability of Boards to do their role effectively.

**MOPAC has not provided any evidence that the financial resources it will provide Safer Neighbourhood Boards will be sufficient, either to launch the network properly or to fund the initial work each will need to carry out. It is incumbent on MOPAC to make the case that funding levels are based on a realistic assessment of the how Boards will operate, and the type of support needed to recruit, train and support a volunteer base.**

**Recommendation 5**

**By October 2013, MOPAC should write to the Committee with a detailed assessment of the resources it plans to grant Safer Neighbourhood Boards in 2014/15. This assessment should:**

- Outline how much funding is available for Safer Neighbourhood Boards' core costs (including any additional establishment costs in the first year) along with the rationale for this decision**
- Whether MOPAC will consider additional funding if needed after a period of time.**
- An assessment of the potential costs Boards could incur, and potential areas for savings against CPEG costs (in the context of CPEG funding of up to £50,000).**
- Any external funding MOPAC has identified for Safer Neighbourhood Boards, and how it will support new Boards in accessing that funding.**
- Further details on the “borough problem solving fund”, what it is likely to target, and how much money will be available.**
- More detail about any further resources (for example, MOPAC staff) that will be available to Safer Neighbourhood Boards from April 2014.**

**MOPAC should also ensure that every Safer Neighbourhood Board publishes its annual budget.**

## 5. Conclusion

Replacing the current network of CPEGs with Safer Neighbourhood Boards has some merit. The drive to make community engagement more representative and consistent, as well as to introduce a greater role for victims, is to be welcomed. But this promise is being put at risk by a lack of clarity on the form and functions of Boards, the expectations on volunteers, as well as concerns about adequate resourcing.

The Mayor plans to introduce Safer Neighbourhood Boards during one of the largest reorganisations of neighbourhood policing in thirty years. With changes to Safer Neighbourhood Teams and front counter provision being rolled out over the next year, members of the public will need to be assured that they continue to have a space where they can communicate with the police and help influence local policy. Without this, local communities are unlikely to engage in consultation and cooperation with their police services, which could reduce public confidence. It could also leave the police dangerously exposed should further civil unrest, such as that which took place in August 2011, occur.

As public confidence and the success of the neighbourhood policing model are vital to the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, MOPAC must ensure that public engagement remains a priority. It must demonstrate that it has carefully considered what role Safer Neighbourhood Boards can play within boroughs, how it will ensure this is consistent across London, and that adequate financial resources are provided.

MOPAC must take responsibility for ensuring that Safer Neighbourhood Boards, at a minimum, will be an improvement on the status quo come April 2014. It was the Mayor's decision to end the current community engagement structure. It is therefore incumbent on him and MOPAC to ensure that what replaces it is fit for purpose and sustainable in each borough in London.

# Appendix 1 Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

MOPAC needs to urgently provide clearer guidance to those looking to set up Safer Neighbourhood Boards. As a Mayoral initiative, it is incumbent on MOPAC to clarify to CPEG and borough partners what Boards are expected to do and how.

## Recommendation 2

By October 2013, MOPAC should write to the Committee confirming:

- Which of the initial ten responsibilities will be required of each Safer Neighbourhood Board.
- What MOPAC expects from each Board in order to successfully carry out each duty.
- How MOPAC will monitor and evaluate each duty.
- How it has communicated this information to those looking to set up Safer Neighbourhood Boards.

## Recommendation 3

By October 2013, MOPAC should write to the Committee outlining in greater detail:

- What Safer Neighbourhood Boards basic structure could look like in order to fulfil the functions outlined in Section 2, recognising that MOPAC wants to leave some room for Boards to reflect local circumstances
- Expectations about the Membership of Boards, how they can ensure they are comprehensively representative of the communities they serve, and whether term limits will still be placed on membership.

## Recommendation 4

As the Deputy Mayoral for Policing and Crime signs off on each Board proposal, he should publish a Deputy Mayor Decision setting out the agreed proposal and his reasons for granting approval to each structure.

## Recommendation 5

By October 2013, MOPAC should write to the Committee with a detailed assessment of the resources it plans to grant Safer Neighbourhood Boards in 2014/15. This assessment should:

- Outline how much funding is available for Safer Neighbourhood Boards' core costs (including any additional establishment costs in the first year) along with the rationale for this decision
- Whether MOPAC will consider additional funding if needed after a period of time.

- An assessment of the potential costs Boards could incur, and potential areas for savings against CPEG costs (in the context of CPEG funding of up to £50,000).
- Any external funding MOPAC has identified for Safer Neighbourhood Boards, and how it will support new Boards in accessing that funding.
- Further details on the “borough problem solving fund”, what it is likely to target, and how much money will be available.
- More detail about any further resources (for example, MOPAC staff) that will be available to Safer Neighbourhood Boards from April 2014.

**MOPAC should also ensure that every Safer Neighbourhood Board publishes its annual budget.**

## Appendix 2 Table of proposed Safer Neighbourhood Board functions

Safer Neighbourhood Board responsibility from MOPAC's September 2012 letter	Current CPEG task	Issues raised
Monitoring complaints against borough based officers	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOPAC has confirmed that Boards will not be expected to hear or deal with specific complaints.</li> <li>• Boards will be expected to monitor trends in local police complaints.</li> <li>• MOPAC said that regular data should be supplied by local borough commanders to facilitate this duty</li> </ul>
Merging with current MPS Independent Advisory structure	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MPS has since confirmed to the Committee that the borough IAG structure will remain independent of Safer Neighbourhood Boards.</li> <li>• Borough IAGs may be expected to report regularly to Safer Neighbourhood Boards.</li> <li>• A member of the borough IAG may be expected to sit on the Safer Neighbourhood Board</li> </ul>
Establishing policing priorities in the borough	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is unclear what role Boards can play in setting local priorities, particularly with the MPS also planning Panels at ward level which are likely to carry out similar tasks, and Community Safety Partnerships undertaking borough-wide priority setting.</li> <li>• MOPAC has already established a set of seven priority crime types, as well as a series of additional issues it will monitor closely through its Police and Crime Plan.</li> </ul>
Delivering stop and search community monitoring	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not yet clear if all Boards will have the expertise to monitor this issue in future. Stop and search statistics can be contentious and many CPEGs have spent years building expertise to monitor them effectively.</li> </ul>
Monitoring crime performance and community confidence	Yes/No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most CPEGs feature regular reporting from borough commanders on local crime statistics but the duty on monitoring community confidence is new and may be a complex task.</li> <li>• MOPAC has not made it clear what measure of community confidence it would like Boards to monitor.</li> </ul>

Ensuring the system of custody visiting is delivered	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is currently a statutory programme carried out by MOPAC.</li> <li>• The Mayor’s manifesto said that Board members would undertake the role of ICV volunteers and visit custody suites in each borough.</li> <li>• The Deputy Mayor has confirmed to the Committee that the management of this programme will remain with MOPAC; Boards will be expected to monitor its delivery and findings.</li> <li>• A representative of the local ICV scheme may be expected to sit on the Safer Neighbourhood Board</li> </ul>
Playing a significant role in Community Payback	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOPAC has not provided information on how Boards will be expected to carry out this duty, including what a ‘significant role’ entails.</li> </ul>
Ensuring all wards have a ward panel of residents	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ward panels are the responsibility of the MPS – Boards will only have a monitoring and reporting role.</li> <li>• MOPAC expects between one and three representatives from ward panels also to sit on Safer Neighbourhood Boards</li> </ul>
Supporting Neighbourhood Watch	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOPAC has not yet defined the nature of this support.</li> <li>• There is wide variation in the coverage of Neighbourhood Watch teams across London.</li> </ul>
A duty to hear and monitor complaints from victims	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOPAC expect Boards to monitor trends in victims’ data, promote and publicise access to the system and include victim representation on the Boards to provide specific insights and knowledge.</li> <li>• This is seen as potentially problematic due to the extensive training that Boards will need to provide the necessary support to victims</li> </ul>

# Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Crime Manifesto, the Mayor of London, March 2012, page 15
- <sup>2</sup> Q+A: Scarman Report, BBC News, April 2004
- <sup>3</sup> Scarman, Lawrence & Community Engagement, Safer London
- <sup>4</sup> MPS still funds its own borough network of community engagement structures. Known as Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), they are the responsibility of each borough commander and provide advice and guidance to the police to help prevent critical incidents escalating (these may be external or internal incidents) and act as a sounding board for the police to understand the potential impact on communities of police practices and operations
- <sup>5</sup> MPA Review into Community and Police Engagement Groups, MPA Archive website
- <sup>6</sup> Information on current funding of CEPGs are published through MOPAC's Deputy Mayoral Decisions
- <sup>7</sup> As highlighted by Steve O'Connell, MOPAC's advisor on neighbourhoods, Transcript of the 13 June Police and Crime Committee Meeting.
- <sup>8</sup> The Police and Crime Committee held two public meetings on Safer Neighbourhood Boards: on 13 and 27 June 2013. At the meeting on 13 June, the Committee discussed the topic with Steve O'Connell AM (MOPAC advisor on neighbourhoods), Martin Davis (Vice Chair of LCP2) AND Jamie Wilcox (Director of Volunteer Services at Great Ormond Street Hospital). On 27 June, the Committee's guests were Stephen Greenhalgh (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime) and Assistant Commissioner Craig Mackey.
- <sup>9</sup> These functions included:
  - A duty to hear and monitor complaints from victims.
  - Monitoring public complaints against borough based police officers.
  - Merging with the current MPS Independent Advisory Group structure.
  - Establishing policing priorities in the borough.
  - Delivering stop and search community monitoring.
  - Monitoring crime performance and community confidence.
  - Ensuring the system of custody visiting is delivered.
  - Playing a significant role in Community Payback.
  - Ensuring all wards have a ward panel of residents.
  - Supporting Neighbourhood Watch.
- <sup>10</sup> From Letter to local authority chief executives from Natasha Plummer (MOPAC Head of Borough Information and Engagement)
- <sup>11</sup> Transcript of 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- <sup>12</sup> Crime Manifesto, the Mayor of London, March 2012, page 15
- <sup>13</sup> Assistant Deputy Craig Mackey confirmed to the Committee on 27 June that IAGs would remain the responsibility of the borough commanders
- <sup>14</sup> Assistant Deputy Craig Mackey confirmed to the Committee on 27 June that IAGs would remain the responsibility of the borough commanders
- <sup>15</sup> Transcript of 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting



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- 16 Crime Manifesto, the Mayor of London, March 2012, page 15
- 17 Evidence from Steve O' Connell and Martin Davis taken from the transcript of 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 18 Letter from Steve O' Connell, MOPAC advisor on Neighbourhoods to the Chair of the Police and Crime Committee, 31 July 2013
- 19 Transcript of 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 20 Transcript of 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 21 Correspondence from Chair of Lambeth CPEG to Chair of Police and Crime Committee
- 22 Evidence from Steve O' Connell and Martin Davis taken from the transcript of 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 23 Crime Manifesto, the Mayor of London, March 2012, page 15
- 24 Details from the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh, transcript of the 27 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 25 As stated by Steve O' Connell, transcript of the 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 26 From Letter to local authority chief executives from Natasha Plummer (MOPAC Head of Borough Information and Engagement)
- 27 An initial figure of £5,000 was revealed by Martin Davis at the 13 June meeting, following a previous conversation with MOPAC. The figure was not challenged by Steve O' Connell, and was later confirmed as £5,200 by the Deputy Mayor during the Committee's 27 June meeting.
- 28 Details taken from the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh, transcript of the 27 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 29 Transcript of the 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 30 Currently, CPEGs bid for a maximum level of funding which is set by MOPAC. Since 2009 this maximum reduced from approximately £50,000 to £35,000 for each CPEG with further reductions likely in the next financial year. In 2012/13, MOPAC allocated a total of £960,000 to CPEGs, down from £1.29 million in 2011/12
- 31 This suggestion was made by both Steve O' Connell and Deputy Mayor Greenhalgh during the 13 and 27 June meetings
- 32 The Committee notes that this has emerged as a major concern during the current transition period. Some CPEGs who also have charitable status have contacted the Committee to express concerns that their volunteer Boards may now be personally liable for the financial costs of ending operations (such as redundancy pay for workers). The Deputy Mayor has previously said to the Committee that he will examine each case individually to determine if MOPAC will provide additional resources to meet that cost,
- 33 As outlined by Steve O' Connell at the 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting
- 34 Transcript of the 13 June Police and Crime Committee meeting

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