

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Work of the Police and Crime Committee in 2017-18



October 2018

Holding the Mayor to
account and investigating
issues that matter to
Londoners

LONDONASSEMBLY

The London Assembly

The London Assembly is a crucial check on the powers of the Mayor of London. As the most powerful directly-elected politician in the UK, it is important the Mayor is held publicly and democratically accountable.

The Assembly examines the decisions and actions of the Mayor to ensure promises to Londoners are delivered and the money he spends, collected from Londoners, is wisely spent.

The 25 London **Assembly Members** are elected every four years at the same time as the Mayor of London. The Assembly holds the Mayor and Mayoral advisers to account by publicly examining policies and programmes. In addition, the Assembly questions the Mayor ten times a year at Mayor's Question Time.

Assembly meetings are open to the public, so Londoners can stay informed about the activities of the Mayor and the Assembly can publicly review their performance.

As well as examining the Mayor's actions and decisions, Assembly Members act as champions for Londoners by investigating issues that are important to the capital. The Assembly can press for changes to national, mayoral or local policy.

Assembly achievements

- Summoned the former Mayor, **Boris Johnson MP**, back to City Hall to answer questions about the cancelled **Garden Bridge** project. The Assembly's previous work is credited with exposing many of the real problems that emerged with the multi-million-pound project.
- Highlighted a wide range of issues in the running of the former **Olympic Stadium** (the 'London Stadium'), maintaining the spotlight on the legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games.
- Produced a number of '**Brexit Directives**' to the Mayor in relation to the impact for London of leaving the EU. The recommendation to provide further information for EU nationals currently living in London was adopted by the Mayor.
- Influenced the Mayor's **transport strategy** around the break down of mode share and integration of door to door services.
- After the 'Driven to Distraction' report on **bus safety**, the Mayor announced permanent toilets for drivers on all routes.

- Successfully influenced the Mayor’s policy and statutory **environmental strategy** in relation to bottled water in London.
- Had a major impact on the Mayor’s primary policy document – the London Plan – in relation to **off-site construction methods**.
- Challenged the Mayor on his proposals to tackle **health inequalities** in London.
- Held sessions with high-profile guests such as **Jeremy Vine** on the perils of cycling in London.
- Worked with the Mayor and London government partners to look at the issues arising from the tragedy of the **Grenfell Tower fire**.
- Urged the Mayor to draw up a **gun crime strategy** after offences rose by 44 per cent in just three years to 2017.
- Unanimously agreed a motion to support the introduction of a **Domestic Abusers Register**. It wrote to all London MPs and lobbied the government to include it in its new Domestic Abuse Bill.

The Police and Crime Committee

The **London Assembly Police and Crime Committee** is a cross-party body, chaired by Conservative Assembly Member Steve O’Connell.

We examine the work of the Mayor and his Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), to make sure that he is delivering on the promises made to Londoners in his Police and Crime Plan. We also investigate other issues relating to policing and crime in the capital.

Our work involves a range of activities, including meetings with MOPAC, the Metropolitan Police and other organisations; site visits; written consultations; and roundtable meetings.

We hold a Question and Answer (Q&A) session in public every month with a representative from MOPAC—normally the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime—and a representative from the Metropolitan Police on current issues, to find out what they are doing to keep Londoners safe. We also carry out in-depth investigations into different topics, such as youth violence, antisocial behaviour and preventing extremism.

We routinely publish the findings and recommendations of our investigations, including the responses we receive from the Mayor. These can be found on our [investigations page](#).

Your Police and Crime Committee members this year were



**Steve O'Connell
AM
(Chairman)
Conservative**



**Len Duvall AM
Labour**



**Sian Berry AM
(Deputy Chair)
Green**



**Florence
Eshalomi AM
Labour**



**Tony Arbour AM
Conservative**



**Susan Hall AM
Conservative**



**Unmesh Desai
AM
Labour**



**Caroline Pidgeon
MBE AM
Liberal Democrat**



**Andrew Dismore
AM
Labour**



**Peter Whittle AM
UKIP**

Steve O'Connell AM

Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee



2017-18 has been a testing year for London's police forces and for the resilience of our city. Terrorism, the Grenfell Tower fire, and rises in violent crime have pushed the police to their limits. The dedication and bravery of our officers, special constables and Police Community Support Officers is admirable and should be applauded.

The leadership of the Mayor, as the Police and Crime Commissioner for London, needs to be as effective as possible. As Chairman of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee I, along with my fellow committee members, have sought to make sure that both he and his Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) are delivering what is needed to keep Londoners safe.

This report summarises the work we have done this year. We have looked at issues such as antisocial behaviour, collaboration across London's three police forces, healthcare provision in custody, and the rising level of violence in the capital. We have also continued to question MOPAC and the Metropolitan Police in public on current issues, so that you can hear about what they are doing on your behalf.

This year we are continuing to hold the Mayor to account on his commitments in the Police and Crime Plan and examine the issues that matter to Londoners. We plan to pay specific attention to the experiences of victims of crime and look at what officers on the front line need to be able to do their job well.

“Your involvement is crucial to our work. I hope that you will contribute your views to our investigations in the coming year and let us know about the policing and crime issues that concern you.”

Your involvement is crucial to our work. I hope that you will contribute your views to our investigations in the coming year and let us know about the policing and crime issues that concern you. While we can't resolve individual cases or complaints, your input helps us to identify the big issues and to hold the people tasked with keeping London a safe place to live, work, and visit to account.

I would like to thank everyone that has been involved in our work this year for their support and contributions.

What we have done this year

- Following our detailed work on the failure of the Met and Crown Prosecution Service to charge Lutfur Rahman, the disgraced ex-Mayor of Tower Hamlets, **the Met re-opened a number of lines of inquiry**. There is on-going work to revisit existing evidence and to collect new statements and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services provides an independent oversight on that work.
- We **kept up the pressure on MOPAC and the Met to make the city safer regarding violent crime** and moped gangs. Statistics published and discussed by us shape the regional and national debate on violent crime.
- We have examined MOPAC and the Met's transition to Basic Command Units, a huge **re-organisation of local policing** which will replace the 32 borough-model with 12 BCUs.
- Our report on the rise in gun crime found how much of it is non-gang related and **urged the Mayor to draw up a gun crime strategy** to refocus policing efforts.
- The Mayor praised our work on preventing extremism in London and has used this to reinforce the need for a **better arrangement with the Home Office on the Government's Prevent Strategy**.

- **We met with women who had experience of the criminal justice system**, including those in prison, to look at the impact of there being no prison for women in London, and how to better reduce offending and reoffending.
- After **criticising MOPAC for the lack of information it makes available to Londoners** about what it does, it agreed to publish more online, where information is suitable for public disclosure.
- We **launched a report on antisocial behaviour** with 50 organisations in City Hall, which found that reports of antisocial behaviour have risen over recent years but that data across London is inconsistent and that cost cutting has had an impact on the response to it.
- We **brought together doctors, nurses, police officers and volunteers working in custody** to hear about the challenges in delivering effective healthcare for often very vulnerable people detained in police cells.
- We continued to press for **greater clarity for the police on what the Government's Brexit proposals will mean for safety and security**, especially access to vital Europol databases.

Bringing antisocial behaviour back up the agenda



In July, we launched an investigation to look at the levels of antisocial behaviour in the capital and how the police and other partners, including the Mayor, work together to tackle it. We heard from a range of people and organisations, including local authorities, housing associations and Safer Neighbourhood Boards. We also visited Bethnal Green Police

station to hear about the innovative work taking place in Tower Hamlets to reduce antisocial behaviour.

What we found was that relying on data from the Met alone does not give us an accurate picture of how much antisocial behaviour takes place, and that levels of antisocial behaviour have risen over recent years. We also found that the use of powers available to reduce antisocial behaviour was variable across London, and funding to tackle it is under considerable pressure.

Our report, ‘Respecting others: tackling antisocial behaviour in London’, was launched at City Hall with over 50 organisations attending to discuss our recommendations, which included rolling out Antisocial Behaviour Warning Notices more widely across London and promoting the use of Community Remedy and Community Trigger powers.



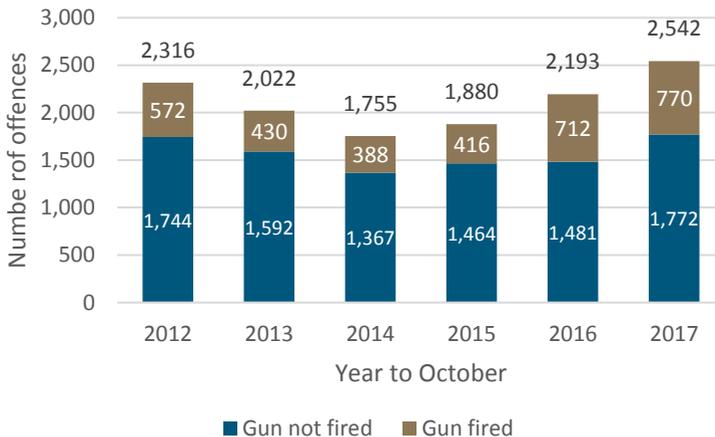
Police and Crime Committee Chairman Steve O'Connell AM launches the report at City Hall

The Met welcomed the report and told us that the Antisocial Behaviour Warning Notice scheme would be reviewed and piloted more widely. The Mayor said that he is working with partners to explore lack of take up of Community Remedy and Community Trigger and would explore whether a multi-agency antisocial behaviour forum should be re-established.

A focus on gun crime

In October, we looked at the rise in gun crime in the capital. We found that gun crime has been increasing since 2014, and that the supply of guns from abroad is a growing concern, particularly as the use of technology and ‘the dark web’ is changing the way people can access weapons. We also found that the amount of gun crime linked to gangs—something traditionally associated with guns—wasn’t as strong as first anticipated.

Gun crime offences in London have started to rise



Source: Metropolitan Police

Our report, published in January 2018, suggested that the ways that we tackle gun crime might need to be much more wide-ranging than a sharp focus on gang activity. Alongside our report we wrote to the Mayor to ask him to consider

whether gun crime, in the same way as knife crime, requires a distinct strategy. We asked him to carry out further research to build a clearer picture of how guns enter London from abroad and look at what more can be done to fully understand theft of legal guns. We also criticised the Mayor for the lack of transparency on gun crime and called for him to improve the level of information provided to the public.

The report was covered widely in the media and continues to be used as part of the debate about violent crime in London.

The Mayor disagreed with us on the need for a distinct strategy on gun crime but did promise to continue consulting with young victims of gun crime as well as “seeking input through networks such as the London Serious Youth Violence Network [...] to ensure an effective response to victims and perpetrators of gun crime”. The Mayor also said that MOPAC would publish a ‘weapon-enabled crime’ dashboard, which was then published in spring 2018.

Challenging MOPAC

In January 2018, we challenged MOPAC's Chief Executive Officer and Directors on various aspects of its work: particularly its scrutiny of the Met, how it delivers value for money, and its transparency and openness.

We were particularly concerned that MOPAC was not adequately holding the Met to account, which meant it was missing the chance to identify risks around issues such as electoral fraud. On its transparency, we criticised the lack of information MOPAC publishes, particularly around consultation responses and other major pieces of work.

Our ongoing scrutiny of MOPAC has resulted in changes to the way it operates. It has agreed to put in place a process for publishing more of its work online, where information is suitable for public disclosure. It also changed its consultation on public access and engagement, after we criticised the questions it was asking the public, suggesting that they were "loaded, and intended to steer respondents to a particular answer."

Question and Answer sessions

Ten times a year a representative from MOPAC, normally the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and a representative from the Met, appear in front of the committee to answer questions on a wide range of current issues. This is a vital way of holding the Mayor accountable for his actions.



The committee questions the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police ten times a year

This year, we discussed over 30 different topics at Q&A meetings. These are just some examples:

- The Mayor appeared in front of the committee in September, the first time since his appointment. We questioned him on a range of topical issues, including the Grenfell Tower fire, tackling serious violence, and the future of frontline policing.

- We heard from the newly appointed Met Commissioner shortly after her appointment. We questioned her on her priorities for the Met and heard that she intends to focus on issues of violence; vulnerability; crime prevention; and public confidence.
- We have received regular updates on the progress of the Met’s investigation into the Grenfell Tower fire, and investigations into terror attacks.
- We have challenged the Met and MOPAC on changes to front line policing, where borough policing teams are being merged and which resulted initially in drops in performance of the Met and in public satisfaction.



The Commissioner, Cressida Dick, appeared in front of the committee four times this year to answer questions on policing in London

Visits and other meetings

- In January 2018, we brought together London's three police forces: the Met, City of London Police and British Transport Police, to look at the ways they collaborate on issues like terrorism, public order and tackling violence.
- We called on the Met, Tower Hamlets Council and the Electoral Commission to tell us about the measures in place to prevent electoral fraud and voter malpractice in the 2018 Tower Hamlets elections.
- We launched an in-depth piece of work on women offenders, looking at the impact of prison on women from London, and how to reduce offending and reoffending. We met with women who have experience of the criminal justice system, including those in HMP Downview, to hear about their experiences.



The committee heard from organisations involved in providing services for women in the criminal justice system

- We brought together doctors, nurses, custody staff and independent volunteers to hear about the challenges in delivering effective healthcare for often very vulnerable people detained in police cells.
- We joined Budget and Performance Committee members to hear about the financial monitoring and reporting undertaken by the Met and MOPAC.
- We completed our work on security and policing at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. We wrote to the Mayor, asking him to be much clearer on how policing and security are considered when developing the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and challenging him to take policing and security into greater consideration in decisions around planning, regeneration, and new developments across the capital. Unmesh Desai AM will continue this work locally.

Our work for 2018-19

This year we are continuing to hold the Mayor to account for his commitments in the Police and Crime Plan and examining the issues that matter to Londoners.

We will hold investigations into topics such as **violence, mental health and policing, how the Met investigates crimes, and how the Met deals with crimes such as burglary and robbery.**

We will also continue our regular examination of MOPAC and the Met through our monthly Q&A meetings, looking at topics such as **changes to front line policing, police funding and crime prevention.**

Elsewhere in the London Assembly

From time to time other Assembly committees will examine issues related to policing and crime. This year, the **Budget and Performance Committee** published ‘Police funding – who’s paying the Bill?’ following a major investigation into the finances of the Metropolitan Police Service. The committee heard about a Met under severe pressure and highlighted the Mayor’s powers to divert funding from other areas of the GLA Group towards the police service.

The Assembly, sometimes unanimously but sometimes by majority, also agreed statements put forward by individual Assembly members which relate to policing and crime. This includes:

Domestic Violence

The Assembly is concerned that the number of domestic abuse victims in London increased by 15 per cent from 62,546 in 2014 to 71,926 in 2016. Domestic abuse now accounts for approximately 1 in 10 offences in the capital.

The Assembly called on the Mayor to write to the Home Secretary for a register for those convicted of a domestic abuse related offence, similar to that used for sexual offenders. This would shift the onus onto the offender whilst allowing the police to hold information on perpetrators,

prioritise resources based on risk and better protect survivors.

Police use of tasers

The Assembly urged the Mayor to make representations to the Met Commissioner to ensure that the police attempt, to the best of their ability, to ensure that tasers are never used in an unwitnessed and unaccountable way.

The Assembly noted that the best way to guarantee this, is to make sure that all lone taser-carrying officers are equipped with body worn video. Apart from in circumstances where a police officer's safety may be in immediate danger, such video should always be switched on before a taser is discharged.

Police Officer Pay

The Assembly is concerned that the Government did not provide any additional money to MOPAC or the Metropolitan Police Service to fund an agreed police pay rise. The Government insisted that the money come from existing police budgets.

The Assembly called on central government to fully fund a pay raise for the police. It also called on the Mayor to write

to the Government asking that it fully fund the cost of the September 2017 pay rise and the cost of any pay rise announced in the 2018-19 police pay awards to give the Met the confidence to fairly remunerate police officers for their outstanding work keeping London safe, without the need to compromise other parts of the service.

How can I get involved in the committee's work?

- Contribute to our investigations. Details on our current work can be found on the [Police and Crime Committee webpage](#).
- Get in touch with us via policeandcrimecommittee@london.gov.uk.
- Raise issues of concern with [Assembly Members directly](#).
- Tweet us [@LondonAssembly](#) and follow committee Twitter conversations with #AssemblyPolice. 
- Come to a committee meeting at City Hall – you are welcome to come and [observe our debates](#).
- [Watch our meetings live](#) from your computer, mobile or tablet.



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