

Response to the Mayor's draft consultation budget 2014-15

January 2014



Budget and Performance Committee Members

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is the Budget and Performance Committee's response, on behalf of the London Assembly, to the Mayor's draft consultation budget for 2014-15. It draws on the Committee's previous work on the budget, including our review of the Budget Guidance document in July, the core GLA's draft budget in November and the Committee's Pre-Budget Report in December.¹ The Committee also held meetings to discuss the draft consultation budget with the functional bodies (7 & 9 January 2014) and the Mayor (14 January 2014). This response sets out the Committee's views on the key issues arising from the budget and is intended to inform the next stages of the budget-setting process.

¹ Budget and Performance Committee, [Pre-Budget Report 2013](#) December 2013.

2. Police

Performance

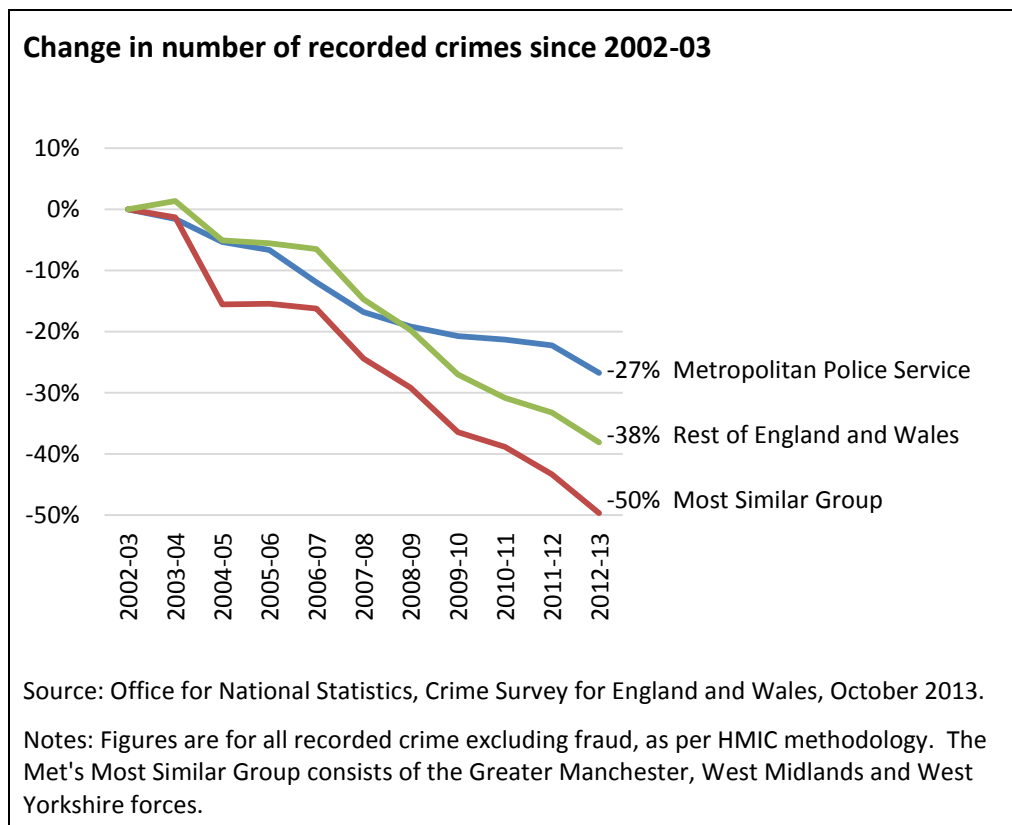
- 2.1. In the ten years between April 2002 and March 2012 the number of recorded crimes in London fell by an impressive 27 per cent.² The Metropolitan Police Service (the Met) achieved this despite a significant increase in London's population and cuts to its budget in the second half of this period. The Committee welcomes this fall in crime, but notes that, over the same ten-year period, the number of recorded crimes in England and Wales – excluding London – fell by some 38 per cent. Recorded crime outside London may have increased slightly in the last quarter for which data is available, but this should not be used to mask the trend of the last ten years.
- 2.2. The Committee has not yet received a satisfactory explanation for the disparity between the fall in crime in London and elsewhere in England and Wales over the last ten years. In response to the Pre-Budget Report we were told that “no in-depth analysis has been undertaken to understand why crime has fallen more slowly in London over the last ten years”. This is a surprising statement given the many academic institutions and other organisations studying crime in England whose work the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) could make use of.³ And if neither the Met nor MOPAC has made use of, or commissioned, such research, it indicates a worrying unwillingness to understand the root causes of crime in London or learn from the experiences of other police forces.
- 2.3. It is an oversimplification to attribute London's smaller drop in crime to its urban character, as the response to the Pre-Budget Report notes. While this may help explain London's higher level of recorded crime, or its higher crime rate, it does nothing to explain the fact that crime in London has fallen far more slowly than it has in the other major urban areas of England. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) groups similar police forces together to help compare performance.⁴ The three forces it uses to compare against the Met are Greater Manchester, West Midlands and West Yorkshire, each covering major urban areas of

² All crime data in this report is taken from the [Office for National Statistics Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) unless otherwise stated.

³ Research comparing crime in London with elsewhere in the UK includes the Institute for Economics and Peace, [UK Peace Index 2013](#), April 2013.

⁴ See the HMIC [Crime and Policing Comparator](#) data for 2013.

England. As the chart below shows, the average drop in recorded crime in these areas over the last ten years was 50 per cent, compared to 27 per cent for London.⁵



And, looking further afield, recorded crime has fallen faster in New York and Los Angeles than it has in smaller cities in the United States, so London's size and character should not be used as an excuse for this disparity in performance.⁶

- 2.4. We recognise that causes of crime are complex – and we note the current debate over the quality of crime statistics – but we are not satisfied with the overly simple explanation we have received so far.⁷ More work is

⁵ 51 per cent drop in Greater Manchester, 49 per cent in West Midlands and 48 per cent in West Yorkshire.

⁶ See, for example, The Economist, [Where have all the burglars gone?](#) 20 July 2013.

⁷ On 14 January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority announced its decision to remove the National Statistics designation from statistics based on recorded crime data in light of "accumulating evidence that suggests the underlying data on crimes recorded by the police may not be reliable". See UK Statistics Authority, [Statistics on Crime in England and Wales](#), January 2014, page 2.

needed to put the Met's performance into proper context – this would help MOPAC understand how policing in London needs to change to reduce crime more quickly.

Recommendation 1

In view of its admission that no in-depth analysis has been carried out before, and in order to help improve the Met's performance, MOPAC should carry out work to understand why crime has fallen more slowly in London than in other urban areas in England over the last ten years.

Workforce

- 2.5. Operating with fewer officers than expected has helped the Met achieve its savings targets. In 2012-13 it spent £79 million below its budget for pay costs, and it is currently expecting to underspend by £25 million in 2013-14.⁸ The Mayor continues to state his desire to see police officer numbers at or around 32,000, but this figure has not been reached during his current term of office. And since November 2012 the number of officers has consistently been lower than 31,000.
- 2.6. The Mayor assured us that the safety of Londoners has not been put at risk while the Met has had fewer than 31,000 officers. Yet he also told us that he remains convinced the Met needs 32,000 officers.⁹ We maintain that the headline figure of officer numbers is less important than issues such as deployment, the mix of support staff and productivity. And we agree with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime's statement that "more important to me than police officer numbers is the performance of the Metropolitan Police Service".¹⁰
- 2.7. The Met is adopting an approach to recruitment that places greater emphasis on getting the right kind of people into the Met than on how fast it can boost numbers. In an effort to make itself more representative of the people it serves, the Met has chosen not to advertise vacancies outside London.¹¹ We support this approach and believe that any temporary issues caused by slow recruitment will be far outweighed by the long-term benefits of having a police force that more closely reflects the diversity of the capital.

⁸ [MOPAC/MPS Revenue Monitoring Report - Provisional Outturn 2012-13](#), July 2013; [MOPAC monthly report to Police & Crime Committee](#), December 2013, page 6.

⁹ Speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 14 January 2014.

¹⁰ Stephen Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 7 January 2014.

¹¹ Craig Mackey, Deputy Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service, speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 7 January 2014.

- 2.8. MOPAC's savings plans depend on a shift in the profile of its workforce – reducing the numbers of middle-ranking and senior officers and Police Community Support Officers, and increasing the number of junior officers. But, as the Met and MOPAC acknowledge, rebalancing the police workforce is difficult and may be contributing to poor morale. For example, it will inevitably lead to fewer promotion opportunities. And as the Met tailors its resource planning more closely to demand for its services – i.e. towards the evening and night time – existing officers may decide to leave and the Met may become less attractive to potential new recruits. These factors can be expected to lead to a loss of experience which could undermine the Met's performance and levels of public confidence.
- 2.9. For over three years this Committee has been pushing the Met and MOPAC (and the Metropolitan Police Authority that MOPAC replaced) to make greater use of Operational Policing Measure (OPM) data, and to publish this information.¹² This information would allow MOPAC to demonstrate that it is succeeding in increasing the proportion of officers and staff in front-line roles. We were surprised to learn that the Met does not use this analysis of its workforce as part of its budget setting process, and we recommended in the Pre-Budget Report that MOPAC ensured this was done in future. We therefore welcome MOPAC's commitment to make greater use of OPM data in setting future budgets and to publish OPM data each quarter.

Recommendation 2

As we requested in the Pre-Budget Report, MOPAC should provide workforce projections for 2014-15 and 2015-16 using the Operational Policing Measure.

¹² For example see the Committee's report, [Policing in London](#), June 2011.

Technology

- 2.10. Our report *Smart Policing* found the Met's technology to be out-of-date, ineffective and expensive to run, and concluded that crime in London was higher as a result.¹³ And the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime recently described the Met's technology as "woeful".¹⁴ The Met is finalising a strategy to update and improve its technology over the next few years and MOPAC has provided the Met with a significant capital budget for investment. This, along with other reforms, has the potential to transform the way the Met operates, particularly to free up officers to spend more time in visible roles, an important factor in boosting public confidence. And by replacing many of the 750 out-of-date systems currently being used, the Met will be able to reduce its ongoing running costs.
- 2.11. This increase in technology investment (£273 million over the next two years) depends on MOPAC generating the forecast capital receipts from land and property sales. We are waiting for more information on the source of these receipts but we expect most to come from a small number of large sites such as Hendon and New Scotland Yard rather than local stations.
- 2.12. The Mayor told us that improving the Met's technology would increase its productivity, but he would not want to use this to cut the number of officers.¹⁵ He also stated that better technology would generate cashable savings. While we expect that some savings will come from lower running costs as large contracts for old systems are allowed to run down, we are waiting for MOPAC to provide us with a breakdown of the savings it expects this investment to generate.

Recommendation 3

MOPAC should provide a breakdown of the cost savings in 2014-15, 2015-16 and beyond it expects to generate from its investment in the Met's technology.

¹³ Budget and Performance Committee, [Smart Policing](#), August 2013.

¹⁴ Stephen Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 7 January 2014.

¹⁵ Speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 14 January 2014.

3. Fire

- 3.1. The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) has done well to produce a balanced budget for 2014-15 at a time of funding cuts and uncertainty. It had identified savings of £34.2 million by November and told us that it expects to approve the final £1.4 million of savings to fill its budget gap at its meeting on 23 January.¹⁶
- 3.2. LFEPA will make most of these savings by implementing its Fifth London Safety Plan (LSP5).¹⁷ Many Members and Londoners have strong views on the content of the LSP5. There are genuine concerns about the ability of the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to protect Londoners, and there has been a great deal of debate over these plans during the last year. But now the plan has been approved, LFEPA officials are implementing it as professionally as possible. On 9 January 2014, 10 fire stations were closed and 14 fire engines cut, leaving London with 102 stations and 155 engines.
- 3.3. LFEPA now expects fewer staff to leave in 2014-15 than it needs to make the planned savings. LSP5 is based on a cut of approximately 600 posts in 2014-15 (some 9 per cent of its workforce) but LFEPA is now estimating a drop of less than 300.¹⁸ This is partly because LFEPA committed to avoiding compulsory redundancies in LSP5, so is relying on natural wastage and voluntary redundancies. LFEPA estimates this delay will cost almost £8 million, and has asked for support from the GLA to meet this cost. The Mayor has confirmed that the GLA will provide this funding to LFEPA from the GLA's resilience reserve; LFEPA will repay this in 2015-16.¹⁹
- 3.4. The Mayor has committed to maintaining LFEPA's funding at £393 million in 2014-15 and 2015-16 and to make up any shortfall in government funding.²⁰ In order to do this the Mayor will increase LFEPA's funding through the retained business rates system and will draw down funds from the resilience reserve in 2015-16. But LFEPA does not have any certainty of funding for 2016-17 and beyond, and has little scope to

¹⁶ Sue Budden, LFEPA Director of Finance and Contractual Services, speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 7 January 2014.

¹⁷ LFEPA, [Fifth London Safety Plan 2013-16](#), September 2013.

¹⁸ LFEPA Resources Committee paper, [Budget Update](#), 11 November 2013, paragraph 34.

¹⁹ Speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 14 January 2014.

²⁰ Mayor of London, [Consultation Budget 2014-15](#), December 2013, page 29.

generate income of its own. The resilience reserve is not a sustainable source of funding, and a longer-term strategy for funding London's fire services needs to be put in place, particularly given that Mayor will set LFEPA's 2016-17 budget before the end of his term of office.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should explain how he intends to fund LFEPA in the medium term in the context of falling government grant funding, and whether another major round of savings will be needed.

4. Housing and land

Surplus land

- 4.1. MOPAC and LFEPA are selling large parts of their estates as part of their wider transformation programmes. Some police and fire stations have closed, and some sites have already been sold. The capital receipts these sales generate are important for their investment programmes – particularly technology for MOPAC and fleet replacement for LFEPA. Without these sales it will be very difficult for MOPAC and LFEPA to implement their reform programmes – running costs on properties would not be cut, and interest charges would be higher if investment was funded through borrowing. An additional factor is that the GLA’s individual functional bodies each have a statutory duty to gain best value from asset sales – this may be driving the way they are disposing of their land and property assets.
- 4.2. There appears to be some tension between the obvious needs of individual functional bodies to maximise their capital receipts, and the Mayor’s wish to achieve his wider objectives, particularly to build more affordable housing. Functional bodies may be able to achieve higher sale prices for their assets if they are to be used for luxury accommodation than for affordable housing – the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime told us that

*Our priority is to maximise our capital receipts and it is not to subsidise house-building or schools. Where there is genuine interest and people can pay a fair price for something, we will obviously look for the social value, but at the moment the instruction that we have is to get best consideration and reinvest this into core policing, which is under tremendous budgetary pressure.*²¹

- 4.3. We are currently unsure what the GLA Group’s approach is to asset sales, and it is therefore important that the Mayor has a clear, high-level asset strategy that all the functional bodies agree to apply to their own disposal programmes. The core GLA has recently published its own property asset strategy, setting out five objectives including the construction of

²¹ Speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 7 January 2014.

new homes and the generation of capital receipts and ongoing income.²² This may provide a model for other functional bodies to follow.

- 4.4. The Mayor has confirmed that negotiations with government are progressing positively regarding the GLA taking responsibility for all central government land disposals in London.²³ The Mayor stated that a decision would be made in the spring. The GLA hopes to be able to use this surplus land to meet the Mayor's objectives, but we expect government departments to want to maximise their capital receipts in the way that the GLA's own functional bodies do. We look forward to finding out more as negotiations progress over the coming months.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should clarify his strategy for disposing of surplus sites across the GLA Group, and how he is ensuring that the functional bodies are reaching the right balance between generating capital receipts and achieving his wider Mayoral objectives.

Affordable Homes Programme

- 4.5. The March 2015 completion deadline for the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) is now putting developers off starting new builds under that programme. As the National Housing Federation told us,

The March 2015 drop dead date has unintentionally hampered delivery and there is evidence it has pushed up land and tender prices as housing associations try to meet their programme commitments in line with the timetable.

The lack of certainty over whether providers would receive any grant for schemes completed after March 2015 has meant that some schemes are now not starting.²⁴

- 4.6. In response to our Pre-Budget Report recommendation that the GLA should consider options to reduce this disincentive, the GLA has told us that developers can apply for funding from the Mayor's Housing Covenant (MHC) programme for 2015-18 instead. But this could change the types of affordable homes being built. The AHP, which the GLA

²² Paper to GLA Investment and Performance Board, [Property Asset Strategy](#), 15 November 2013.

²³ Speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee, 14 January 2014.

²⁴ Email from the National Housing Federation to Committee Officers, 18 December 2013.

inherited from the Homes and Communities Agency, had a 76:24 split between rented and ownership homes. But unspent AHP money that is re-allocated to the MHC will fund a mix of tenures in line with the London Plan balance (60:40 rented to ownership). If the GLA does not spend its 2014-15 AHP budget, fewer rented affordable homes will be built than previously thought.

- 4.7. The Mayor transferred £62 million of AHP funding to his MHC programme in 2013. Not all of the remaining AHP pot will be spent, and the Mayor will be able to transfer this to other housing programmes. It is not clear how much AHP funding will be available to transfer, nor how this money will be used. We will monitor this issue over the next year to see what kinds of housing this funding is used for.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should estimate by how much the Affordable Housing Programme will be underspent by March 2015, and set out how he intends to use that money.

5. Transport

Fares decision

- 5.1. We welcome the Mayor's decision to increase fares by below inflation.²⁵ In 2012 we noted that the evidence suggested that the Mayor could limit fare rises to RPI with no detriment to services levels or Transport for London's (TfL) investment programme, and we are pleased that the Mayor now agrees with us.²⁶ This, along with the two-week delay to the fare increase, is good news for Londoners, but it has left TfL with less funding than it envisaged when it set its business plan in December. TfL estimates that the decision to increase Travelcards by RPI, rather than RPI+1, will cost it approximately £13 million each year, and that the two-week delay to the fares increase will cost a one-off sum of around £5 million.²⁷ £13 million a year is a relatively small reduction in funding given TfL has an annual budget in excess of £10 billion. Even so, additional funding will be needed from elsewhere (or further efficiency savings generated) if TfL is to fulfil its latest business plan.
- 5.2. The Mayor told us he had "absolutely no doubt" that the government would compensate TfL for this lost income, and TfL pointed to precedent in previous years where the government had provided additional funding to offset lost fares income.²⁸ However, TfL told us that it had had no contact from government on this issue, and, when asked, Nicky Morgan MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, appeared to state that the government did not intend to compensate TfL:

*The Mayor of London decided to cap Transport for London fare increases to an average of RPI+0 for the 2014 calendar year. Decisions by the Mayor of London regarding London transport fares, and the funding of those decisions, are a matter for the Mayor of London.*²⁹

To fully offset the lost fare income from the decision to increase Travelcards by RPI, rather than RPI+1, the government would need to

²⁵ The average increase across all TfL fares will be 2.7 per cent, below the 3.1 per cent inflation (RPI) benchmark for July 2013 (as used by the government when setting regulated national rail fares). We therefore use the phrase "below inflation" even though the latest RPI figure (for December 2013) was 2.0 per cent.

²⁶ Budget and Performance Committee, [Pre-Budget Report 2012](#), December 2012

²⁷ Email from TfL to Committee Officers, 16 January 2014.

²⁸ Speaking at the Budget and Performance Committee meetings, 14 and 9 January 2014.

²⁹ [HC Deb 6 January 2014 c163W](#)

agree to a permanent uplift in funding for TfL of £13 million each year, not just in 2014-15.

Capital expenditure

- 5.3. TfL has a huge capital programme with government funding agreed through to 2020-21, but in recent years it has significantly underspent its capital budget. In 2011-12, TfL underspent its capital budget by £287 million (14 per cent) and in 2012-13 by £234 million (12 per cent). To tackle this problem, TfL dramatically increased the level of overprogramming in its capital budget for 2013-14. It is too early to judge how effective this new approach has been across the whole of TfL, but monitoring information suggests significant underspends have persisted in some areas such as cycling, which is forecast to underspend its budget for the year by £38 million (34 per cent). We will continue to monitor TfL's capital expenditure and assess the effectiveness of its attempts to minimise underspends and ensure that investment takes place as planned.

Time-based ticketing

- 5.4. In the Pre-Budget Report we asked TfL to publish a range of fully-costed ticketing options to encourage part-time travel, reduce peak-time travel and reduce costs for low-paid workers. TfL was unable to meet the agreed deadline of the end of 2013 for an initial estimate of these costs (a fuller response was requested by June 2014), and has yet to provide it to the Committee.
- 5.5. The Committee also asked TfL to estimate the wider economic benefits these options could generate for London, but this point was not addressed in the Mayor's response to the Pre-Budget Report. The Committee feels that, without some estimate of the benefits of these options, it is very difficult for the Assembly, and Londoners, to have a proper debate over their value.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should ask TfL to work with the GLA Intelligence Unit to produce some estimates of the social and economic benefits of time-based ticketing options to address the following objectives: to encourage part-time work, reduce peak-time travel, and reduce travel costs for low-paid workers. This should be provided to the Committee by June 2014, together with the costs of those ticketing options to TfL.

6. The budget process

- 6.1. TfL continues to fail to comply with the requirements of the Mayor's budget guidance. It has stated that it considers its 10 year business plan to be its submission for the budget process, but this document does not have the details requested in the budget guidance that other functional bodies were able to provide. For example, it does not include annual savings targets or a breakdown of its planned expenditure on capital programmes. Other functional bodies are able to provide this information, so it is disappointing that TfL, with its well-resourced finance team, chooses not to. As the budget guidance states, the budget submissions from functional bodies should be public documents.³⁰ So although TfL may provide all the information the GLA needs to compile the Mayor's budget, not all the information required by the budget guidance is made public. This hampers the Assembly's ability to scrutinise its budget, and is a weakness in TfL's otherwise impressive move towards greater transparency over the last year.
- 6.2. The Mayor has again refused to release the advice he receives from TfL regarding his annual fares decision. This is a crucial element of the budget-setting process that the Assembly, and many others, want to see. The Information Commissioner's Office is now looking at the GLA's refusal to release this advice in response to a Freedom of Information Act request made by John Biggs AM in July 2013.
- 6.3. The prioritisation process for the core GLA budget was not completed in time to be included in the draft consultation budget. We have therefore not been able to examine, for example, the funding proposals for the Mayor's programmes to tackle carbon emissions and consider whether the budgets are sufficient to meet the targets in the Mayor's Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy (CCMES).³¹ We are also concerned that the targets in the GLA's own business plan – which should be achieved with the funding provided in the budget – are less stringent than the targets and milestones in the CCMES.

³⁰ "It is expected that a functional body's response by the end of November will be a public document and not be issued as private advice to the Mayor." [Mayor's Budget Guidance 2014-15](#), page 5.

³¹ Since the Committee's meeting on 14 January, the GLA has updated the Assembly with the results of its prioritisation process. In 2014-15, the RE:FIT programme (workplace retrofitting) has budgeted expenditure of £0.4 million and the RE:NEW programme (home retrofitting) has budgeted expenditure of £1.3 million.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should confirm that he will ensure that all functional bodies fully comply with the requirements he sets out in his budget guidance document for the 2015-16 budget.

Recommendation 9

The Mayor should confirm that the prioritisation process for the 2015-16 core GLA budget will be sufficiently advanced to be included in the 2015-16 draft consultation budget.

Appendix 1 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

In view of its admission that no in-depth analysis has been carried out before, and in order to help improve the Met's performance, MOPAC should carry out work to understand why crime has fallen more slowly in London than in other urban areas in England over the last ten years.

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Chinese

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Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

Greek

Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਅਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটি সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লিখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Arabic

الحصول على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغة،
فارجاء الاتصال بمرقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على
العنوان البريدي العادي أو عنوان البريدي
الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Gujarati

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