

Response from a Camden resident

For the attention of the Mayor of London.

I am responding to the MOPAC Draft Plan in three capacities: as a concerned citizen, as Vice-Chair of a Safer Neighbourhoods Panel (I am not expressing panel views here) and, in recent weeks, as a victim of crime.

The 20:20:20 Approach summarised in Part Two of the document clarifies the nature of the task to be undertaken, i.e. crime must be reduced and public confidence increased, both by 20%, while costs must be cut by 20%. To achieve this triple objective by 2016, measures are proposed in Parts Three and Four which purport to support local policing: the LPM or Local Policing Model.

I have been a panel member in the London Borough of Camden, since the inception of Safer Neighbourhoods. Our public meeting to introduce this new policing model was in July 2006. I have read and re-read your LPM, which seems to me to destroy the model we have had for seven years, substituting something more remote and less satisfactory. Of course people like to see police officers patrolling the streets on foot, but they have become used to seeing familiar faces and to knowing the names of those they encounter. Conversely, officers and PCSOs are familiar with virtually every address in the ward, and know many residents by name. This is neighbourhood policing.

The Mayor and his Assembly will, of course, be conversant with the evolution of Neighbourhood Development Forums, which have the objective of focussing planning and similar concerns on a neighbourhood, rather than on the very large borough of Camden. It seems to me that MOPAC's proposals go in the opposite direction with inspector-led teams and Local Police Areas. More police officers indeed, but unfamiliar faces, officers less familiar with the areas they patrol and almost certainly not acquainted with residents.

I spent some weeks housebound recently after an operation, and had contact with the police concerning damage to my flat door and malicious communications. Two polite and efficient officers from Kentish Town came to see me, but it was very much more constructive and satisfactory subsequently talking to a PC and the PCSOs from West Hampstead whom I know and who know me.

"Every ward will have a named sergeant....." but how will the ward team be constituted? Will there be a panel of members of the public working with the police? Answers to these questions are evaded. An explanation is needed of how the necessary 20% cuts will impact on the present tried and successful model. In our ward, as I believe in every other ward, crime has been reduced and confidence in the police increased. An area is not a neighbourhood.

No explanation is given of what constitutes a Safer Neighbourhoods Board. Who will be the members of the Board? How will the "Area" be defined?

Your "Improving Public Access" section should be **torn up**. It is totally ludicrous, and makes me wonder whether the authors of the Draft Plan have ever been inside a library or a supermarket. Access must be on premises officially occupied by police. Online contact is NOT SUITABLE for a distressed victim of crime or for anyone needing to discuss a matter in confidence. Universal internet access should not be assumed.

I understand that the Draft Plan is driven by the need for cuts. It has some good points and admirable aspirations, but gives the impression of haste rather than

considered thought, throwing out the baby with the bath water in the aspects I have indicated. More thought is required, even if it means implementing later than April.