

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Unmesh Desai AM**

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

**Our ref:** MGLA110619-4657

**Date:** 10 JUL 2019

*Dear Unmesh,*

Thank you for the petition presented to the London Assembly (Plenary) Meeting on 6 June requesting more police on our streets and in our communities.

My top priority as Mayor is keeping Londoners safe and I completely agree with the sentiments of the petition. I have made it clear, repeatedly, that Government cuts to the policing budget are an abdication of its responsibility to public safety.

Your letter rightly points out that a lack of resources has affected the service that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) are able to deliver. The Commissioner has been clear that with additional resources, the MPS could be even more effective in bearing down on violence, tackling the growth in reporting of sexual offences and on-line child exploitation, disrupting serious and organised criminality and tackling those things that matter to local people.

As a result of Government cuts, the MPS have already had to deliver £850 million in savings since 2013-14 and will be required to deliver a further £263 million by 2022-23. I have urged the Government to reverse the cuts forced on the MPS so far.

I am particularly concerned that the Government is continuing to shift the burden of police funding from Government grant to council tax – which is deeply regressive and hits the poorest the hardest. However, the brutal reality of Government cuts means that I have little choice but to increase the policing element of the council tax by the maximum amount allowed by ministers.

I took the difficult decision to raise council tax and divert business rates for a second year in a row which has enabled an additional £234 million of investment for policing and tackling crime. This investment has helped protect 1,300 police officer posts that would otherwise have been lost. This continued investment is expected to take total MPS officer numbers to 31,000 by the end of 2019-20. Furthermore, staff will be recruited to fill investigative and other roles, freeing up officers for frontline duties. In comparison, New York, which is a similar size city to London, has 36,000 officers.

This investment has also enabled me to meet my commitment to double the number of officers working in neighbourhoods across London. Whilst under the previous Mayor there was one PC and one PCSO in each ward, who could be abstracted to other duties, there are now two PCs and one PCSO dedicated to each ward in the capital.

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Responding to emergency calls is a fundamental responsibility of the MPS and Londoners rightly expect a quick and reliable service. The MPS are working hard to improve the service provided to the public. They have sought to modernise non-emergency contact options and now offer a range of telephone and digital channels – including a new MPS website; social media; and for those calling 101, a new menu option that responds to the most common enquiries providing advice, live call transfer to the responsible unit or, when required, to a police operator.


The MPS also regularly reviews response performance through its internal performance boards. Every Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commander reports to a monthly Programme Board, chaired by the Deputy Assistant Commissioner, aimed at identifying and tackling issues as they emerge.

Response time performance is also a standing agenda item at the MPS Strengthening Local Policing Programme Board which my Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) sits on. My Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, also meets with Assistant Commissioner Simmons every month to discuss operational policing and the performance of BCUs – including response times.

I will continue to hold the MPS to account for their performance, but I am conscious that ongoing budgetary pressures have impacted on police officer numbers at a time when 999 and 101 demand continues to rise.

Thank you once again for writing to me on this important issue. Rest assured, I will continue to keep up the pressure and lobby on behalf of Londoners to get the resources and backing our police so desperately need.

Yours sincerely,



**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London