

5<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Stephen Greenhalgh  
Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime  
City Hall  
London  
SE1 2AA

**Councillor Sarah Hayward**  
**Leader of the Council**  
King's Cross Ward  
London Borough of Camden  
Room 125  
Camden Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London WC1H 9JE

Dear Deputy Mayor,

### **The Draft Police and Crime Plan for London**

In responding to this consultation, I would like to state from the outset that Camden does not agree with the fundamental premise which underpins this entire plan: that police budgets should be cut by 20%. In fact this not only underpins, but gravely undermines, the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan. I do not believe the aims of this plan, though often laudable, can be met with such a drastic cut to the resources of the Metropolitan Police.

As a large central London borough with a strong social mix, Camden is well placed to respond to this consultation. We have an extensive and positive relationship with the Metropolitan Police stretching back decades and would not like to see this relationship undermined. As we have highlighted in our formal response, various aspects of this plan threaten to detract from the gains which have already been achieved, particularly in terms of local engagement.

Though the Plan details a commitment to Neighbourhood Policing, this does not seem to be borne out by the reality of these proposals. In 2010, Camden's Safer Neighbourhood Teams had a total of 122 officers, sergeants and PCSOs, but by 2015, the total will be only 105 – that's a *cut* of 17 officers; a situation that would be even worse if we in Camden hadn't invested our own resources to support these teams.

I welcome efforts to make the police more accessible to the broader public, but there is a danger that pursuing 'police in post offices' *instead of*, rather than *in addition to*, front-desk operations. I think this will undermine many of the goals this plan sets out to achieve. For instance, this proposal does not seem to marry with the Mayor's simultaneously stated commitment to improving the reporting of traditionally under-reported crimes, such as sexual and domestic violence, or to encourage witnesses to come forward. I would like to seek assurances as to how this will be facilitated.

I welcome the commitment to further tackle the issues of sexual and domestic violence – crimes we know primarily victimise women. The scale of sexual and domestic violence is disturbingly high and demands urgent action. In particular, new ONS data obtained through FOI requests to the police shows that more could be done to tackle repeat victimisation. Additionally, rape crisis centres must be funded as a priority and should not be left in the precarious position that many have to date, facing an uncertain future.

Alongside the Mayor's aim to cut 20% from policing budgets is a commitment to cut the incidence of certain crimes by 20%. Whilst our concerns about the crime types chosen are detailed within our response, there is also the danger of a perverse logic that runs through all of this. If the police have fewer resources, with fewer police officers and fewer police stations, then surely this *must* have an impact on their ability to effectively keep pace with

and record crimes. If fewer crimes are recorded, it makes sense that crime figures look deceptively reduced.

Indeed the national figures back this up. As total police numbers have fallen by 11,500, figures released by the Home Office show that the proportion of crimes being solved by the police is also falling, with 30,000 fewer crimes solved in the last year, including 7,000 violent crimes against the person. In this context, the Mayor's third over-arching aim – to improve public satisfaction with the Met – seems implausible.

The police, alongside our other emergency services, are being put in a precarious position as a direct result of government funding cuts. Since 2010 the Metropolitan Police have lost around 1,500 police officers. In May 2010, Camden was served by a total of 884 police officers. By 2015, despite the commitment to Neighbourhood Policing professed in this plan, the number will be just 751 – a cut of 133 officers. Police levels are now at their lowest levels in more than a decade, and this proposal offers scant remedy.

Camden is being hit hard by these cuts. With West Hampstead, Albany Street, and Hampstead police stations all faced with closure, and Kentish Town seeing its hours reduced, Camden is faced with the spectre of having only one 24 hour police station serving the whole of the borough. With neighbouring boroughs also facing closures and reductions, this is playing fast and loose with the lives of Camden borough residents, and all the hundreds of thousands of visitors we host each day. For such a large, busy, central borough – a key transport route into the capital, and a top business, tourist and cultural destination – it should be patently clear this is grossly insufficient.

This, alongside the cuts to the other core emergency services, represents a reckless gamble with public safety. We have warned the government for some time that cutting police budgets by 20% will impact frontline policing, and their claim that frontline services can be left unaffected is clearly being exposed as disingenuous.

Our view is that the Government should urgently rethink the scale of police cuts and set out a proper plan for police reform instead. We will therefore be looking forward to hearing Lord Stevens report back from the Independent Commission into the Future of Policing, in the next few months.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Hayward', written in a cursive style.

**Cllr Sarah Hayward**  
**Leader of the Council**