

Lambeth Council's Response to MOPAC: Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017

1. What, if any, other objectives and goals would you add to the Mayor's objectives and goals?

The Plan states that the proposed Local Policing Model aims to increase uniformed officers working in local neighbourhoods (Lambeth an extra 115 by 2015). We dispute this. In reality Lambeth has suffered a 20% cut in police officer numbers between May 2010 and December 2012 according to police workforce figures published monthly on the GLA website. Lambeth needs 100 more officers so the borough is adequately policed. This is incredibly important and we are simply asking for a fair deal for our borough.

Further we would like to suggest that local neighbourhood teams are ring-fenced from abstraction. The Plan and proposals make no reference to the handling of abstractions which makes the delivery of reliable, safe and predictable levels of neighbourhood policing impossible.

The Council supports the headline objectives and goals under the Mayor's "20:20:20 Challenge" – to cut crime in the capital, increase Londoners' confidence in the Metropolitan Police Service and to challenge criminal justice agencies to deliver improved service delivery and value for money.

We would however like to see more focus in the Plan on community involvement and partnership working. We argue that to achieve reductions in crime in the very difficult financial climate the Plan should acknowledge that this will require sustained strong partnership working with communities, stakeholders, businesses and other partners who make up Community Safety Partnerships. We are disappointed that the Plan does not give more focus to partnership and community. Further we are concerned that under the changes proposed by the MOPAC plans, Community Safety Fund monies, (CPEGs) Community Police Engagement Groups, and the Local Policing Model, mean that resources to support police safer neighbourhood teams, effective partnership working and community involvement are all being cut. This will significantly and negatively impact on the achievement of sustainable crime reduction and prevention at a local level in Lambeth.

Crime is Lambeth residents' number one priority. We know from listening to our residents that they want a visible local policing presence in their wards. We know from the analysis of the Public Attitude Survey (PAS), the MPS has identified 4 key drivers of public confidence - Engagement with the Community, Fair Treatment, Effectiveness in Dealing with Crime and Alleviating Local ASB. We do not support the reduction in ward based teams to one Police Constable and Police Community Support Officer per ward and as we understand it a named Sergeant who will have responsibility for a number of wards. We do not believe that



this will improve public confidence, provide safe levels of resource and cut crime at a local level.

It is stated in the Plan that this diminished ward based resource will be supported by Inspector led teams working across a number of wards (Local Police Areas). We believe that the additional duties expected of these officers will in reality mean they are not able to provide a sustained visible presence in neighbourhoods and build strong local community links with residents and businesses.

In summary, we do not believe the proposals in the Plan and the emerging local policing model will translate into a sufficient and safe police resource for Lambeth. We are concerned that instead it will result in local residents having less contact with their local Police officers and these officers will not be able to effectively deal with the wide range of crime and anti-social behaviour on their ward. In his speech to the London Assembly the on 25th Jan 2012 the Mayor said “we will keep the numbers to what I believe to be a safe level... safer neighbourhood teams are sacrosanct to me and will all retain their structure of at least 2 PCs and 3 PCSOs overseen by a sergeant” This promise is being broken in these proposals.

Lambeth views hate crime and violence against women and girls as key safeguarding priorities. Our council's Community Safeguarding Service is delivering a range of initiatives to raise awareness about all forms of hate crime; ensuring victims are given appropriate support; working in schools and other settings to challenge prejudice and promote tolerance. We therefore welcome the focus on Hate Crime in the Plan and the decision to retain MPS Community Safety Units under the local policing model. However, we are concerned that Lambeth will no longer benefit from a specialist vice unit. This small team has extensive experience of policing this difficult and challenging issue; in depth local knowledge of the women involved and those that extort them; and have built good partnership working with a range of statutory and voluntary and community organisations. This experience will be lost if the existing Team of officers is disbanded and we would ask for more flexibility in the local policing model and Borough Commanders are given more discretion to determine what is the most effective policing response that delivers on local crime issues.

In addition, we are concerned that current Police resources to support our Integrated Offender Management (IOM) service are not lost so that we can work with the Mayor's priorities to ensure that we effectively reduce re-offending in Lambeth.

2. What, if any, other things could be done to address police performance and resource issues?

We support the Mayor's commitment to reduce neighbourhood crime by 20% across the seven crime types and the rationale behind this. In order to deliver on this target we believe it will be essential that a strong preventative focus will be required to ensure reductions in



crime are sustainable. This approach needs to embed effective problem-solving; design out crime work and environmental improvements; and retain a strong focus of reducing re-offending by both young people and adults. The Council is driving improvements in its Youth Offending Service and is re-commissioning its IOM service and can make a positive contribution to a preventative approach. The Council has invested £500k in 22 additional Police Community Support Officers to tackle neighbourhood crime at a local level. We recognise that ASB impacts significantly on the quality of life of our residents and tackling it is a priority for the council. We are very concerned that if the ward based teams are reduced as per the local policing plan proposals that this area of progress will be significantly impacted upon with negative consequences for our residents and businesses.

We suggest three key activities for successful Neighbourhood Policing performance namely:

- the consistent presence of dedicated ward teams capable of working in the community to establish and maintain control;
- intelligence-led identification of community concerns with prompt, effective, targeted action against those concerns; and
- joint action and problem solving with the community and other local partners, improving the local environment and quality of life.

In Lambeth we believe that community safety must be at the heart of local partnership working, bringing together different agencies in a wider neighbourhood management approach.

In addition, we are developing our Community Safeguarding Service and believe that this transformation programme can make a significant contribution to this goal. Community safeguarding will support and enable communities where residents, businesses and visitors feel safe and secure through a combination of self-reliance, and targeted and preventative intervention. Several services - including noise and pollution, food, health and safety, licensing, trading standards and community safety - will work together as a single unit aligned to the local policing model sharing resources and intelligence to deliver on our priority outcome of a safe and secure borough.

3. Do you think the confidence in the Metropolitan Police needs to be improved? How do you think that could be done?

Lambeth is a high crime borough currently with low confidence in policing (MPS PAS survey). We know from the analysis of the Public Attitude Survey (PAS), the MPS has identified 4 key drivers of public confidence - Engagement with the Community, Fair Treatment, Effectiveness in Dealing with Crime and Alleviating Local ASB. We support this analysis and strongly believe that greater uniformed visibility; effective engagement of local



residents and businesses at a neighbourhood level and taking swift action to respond to their concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour will be key to improving public confidence.

We fully agree that London's Police service needs to be much more reflective of the capital's diverse communities. In addition, whilst we accept improvements have been made - public concerns about how Section 60 stop and search is used and carried out need to be further addressed. We would advocate that young people and community leaders and representatives need to be involved in training new officers on an on-going basis.

As part of this transformation, elected ward Councillors will be the "Champions" of their local communities and we believe can work with police partners at a neighbourhood level to increase confidence in the Police Service. In addition, ward Councillors can provide valuable intelligence; understand local crime and quality of life issues that matter most to their communities and can effectively advocate on behalf of their constituents. In addition, elected Councillors have an extensive knowledge of local voluntary and community organisations working to make their communities safer.

4. The Mayor has prioritised keeping police officer numbers high rather than keeping underused buildings open. Do you feel that the focus should be on maintaining police numbers or police buildings? How else could budget savings be made?

We recognise the difficult financial envelope that all public services are facing and the challenges with regard to Police funding.

We want to ensure that Lambeth is allocated sufficient uniformed police and other police resources that are required in our borough. Despite performance improvements Lambeth remains a high crime borough. Lambeth has the highest number of Total Notifiable Offences compared to its most similar boroughs and ranked in order of most crimes by type during the financial year to date, ranks 1st for robbery, 3rd for robbery from the person, 5th for theft of motor vehicles and 7th for residential burglary. Overall reoffending rates are 10% higher in Lambeth than the London average.

However, we share the concerns that were expressed by residents and local businesses at the MOPAC Consultation event held in Lambeth on 9th January 2012 about the proposed closure of front counters at Clapham; Cavendish Road and Gypsy Hill Police stations and reduction to office hours at Kennington and Streatham. Many of our residents have expressed disappointment about the consultation process and feel that they were not offered adequate time to make their views known.

We suggest that there needs to be a more robust impact assessment of the implications particularly with regard to Gypsy Hill where this station could be used to provide a base to



Police staff across the neighbouring boroughs of Southwark, Bromley and Croydon. In addition, we expect there to be no decisions made without full consultation with the relevant Lead members from the Council and more opportunities to listen to and take account of the views of local residents who will be directly affected by these proposals. In particular how elderly and vulnerable residents will be impacted.

We are working closely with the Borough Commander to look at how the Council can provide suitable accommodation and public access to uniformed Police staff from Council premises and as part of our Community Safeguarding model of service delivery.

5. What, if any, other things could be done to prevent crime?

We support the view that citizen focus, engaging and empowering the public to work closely with the Police is at the heart of crime prevention. As a co-operative Council we are putting residents and businesses at the heart of commissioning and delivering high quality outcomes in relation to crime and disorder. Through our council Community Safeguarding model; we also want to ensure that a broad range of services work better together and with residents and businesses to support safer and more secure communities.

It is very unclear at this stage how the proposed new Safer Neighbourhood Boards will function to ensure residents and victims of crime truly have a greater voice. It is not clear how they will enhance the excellent work of our existing Safer Neighbourhood Panels and CPEG. We would want to ensure that the responsibilities of the proposed new Board compliment and add value to the work of the Safer Lambeth Partnership which has a statutory duty to undertake an Annual Strategic Assessment of crime and disorder in the borough and then determine local community safety priorities. More thought needs to be given to roles and responsibilities to ensure that there is clarity and not confusion of purpose and that our citizens are clear about who they hold to account.

6. What, if any, other things could be done to address justice and resettlement issues?

We welcome the Mayor's stated intention to ensure the capital's criminal justice system is better at providing Londoners with "swift and surer" justice. It is vital that the Courts and Crown Prosecution Service are active members on local Community Safety Partnerships. However limited resources has meant that this has not happened and a key opportunity for these services to listen to the concerns of local residents, businesses, elected members as well as improve partnership working to reduce re-offending are missed.

We support greater use of community sentences as long as these ensure on-going public protection; are visible to local communities who have been impacted by the offender's behaviour; are not seen as a "soft option" and also support resettlement to reduce the chances of re-offending. We would also request that the Mayor support more opportunities



to use of restorative justice across the criminal justice system which has a proven track record in reducing re-offending and improving victim satisfaction.

We also welcome the Mayor prioritising reducing re-offending rates for young people leaving custody by 20% and hope that additional support can be provided to local projects that have a proven success of working with young offenders to turn around their lives and become law abiding and productive citizens. As is pointed out, dealing with problems such as housing and access to training and employment are key to reducing re-offending. We would urge MOPAC to monitor the impact of the proposed welfare benefit reforms. In addition, we are concerned that the chronic lack of affordable housing in the capital is a persistent challenge for agencies seeking to rehabilitate offenders.

The Council is working closely with HMP Brixton to increase the range of support provision available to prisoners with regard to benefits, debt and other financial problems. We are also looking to increase placement opportunities so that ex-offenders can gain work experience and develop new skills.

In Lambeth we believe that it is important that offenders are seen to be making reparation for their offending behaviour and the impact it has had on local communities. We welcome the greater use of Community Payback (CP) with local residents being able to identify local projects that would benefit from CP.

Drug Intervention Programme: We are concerned that significant resources are involved in breaching offenders (e.g. for failing to attend or remain at their drug assessments) with the Courts handing out “lenient” sanctions e.g. a fine or time served which do not send a clear signal to offenders that there will be consequences to their cautions. We welcome that MOPAC will be monitoring court outcomes and would like to see the Courts use more robust community sentences in relation to these breaches.

7. What, if any, other key crime and safety issues that are important to you would you include?

The key crime and community safety issues set out in the Police and Crime Plan are closely aligned to our strategic priorities in Lambeth, and mirror very much what residents and businesses have told us is of concern to them in Lambeth. We agree that developing a preventative approach to tackle and reduce crime is the right way forward and we would be happy to share learning from our Community Safeguarding initiative and wider Co-operative Council approach to changing the way we work with our residents and businesses.

Whilst we welcome the proposed London wide strategic work to address gang related offending and violence as well as work to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG), we were disappointed with our allocation of funding from the Communities Against Guns Gangs and Knives Fund (50K) given the scale and significance of the problem in Lambeth



and some of our neighbouring boroughs. As a borough we were surprised to be approached for funding for the South London Rape Crisis Centre (SLRCC). Council Officers met with officers from the MOPAC VAWG team to discuss this request for funding. Lambeth have specialist support services already in place, unlike some other boroughs, and therefore the current delivery of the SLRCC does not fit with our local model. Under the current model, women have to travel to Croydon to access the one to one support rather than being supported in borough (which is the Lambeth approach). However, we will continue to work with MOPAC on whether the SLRCC can be re-modelled to better meet the needs of the South London boroughs.

8. Are there any other issues affecting you that have not been covered in the draft Police and Crime Plan?

We are concerned that equalities and diversity considerations are not given focus in the Plan. Further we note that they not given any weighting in the bidding process for the Community Safety Crime Prevention Fund.

Crime and ASB have disproportionate impacts on certain communities. BME and those living in more deprived areas of our borough are more likely to be impacted on by crime and ASB, as they are:

- More likely to be resident in high crime areas
- More likely to be the victims of crime.
- They suffer higher levels of the fear of crime and are significantly more concerned about crime and safety
- They are disproportionately affected by the ancillary social consequences of the operation of criminal networks and drug markets, particularly the increase in gang/group violent offending and the involvement of young people in gangs.

Most crime or offending in Lambeth, as actually experienced by residents, is on the lower risk part of the offending spectrum. These offences constitute a family of issues that are high volume localised in hot spots and multi-dimensional. Lambeth is a borough with high incidence and perception of ASB.

Crime and anti social behaviour are one of our residents top concerns. Most crime or offending in Lambeth, as actually experienced by residents, is on the lower risk part of the offending spectrum. These offences constitute a family of issues that are high volume localised in neighbourhoods and multi-dimensional. Lambeth is a borough with high incidence and perception of ASB.



As stated in the MOPAC Plan we know that ASB has serious impacts on the quality of people's lives. In Lambeth we have developed a victim focussed service to support and tackle vulnerable victims of hate crime and ASB. We believe there is inadequate understanding of the serious impact of ASB on the quality of life and the way it changes everyday behaviour particularly but not exclusively in deprived areas." Over the last 3 years there have been several nationally high profile cases (tragic case of Fiona Pilkington and her learning disabled daughter) where some failure to grip and address ASB has led to tragic consequences. Therefore individuals, particularly people self defining as disabled or who report a long term health condition, are far more susceptible to being harmed by ASB. Likewise neighbourhoods and communities that are already under "stress" from other social forces (such as high levels of socio economic deprivation or high crime rates) also evince a greater likelihood of being negatively impacted by ASB.

The reputational consequences for Lambeth as a high crime borough undermines community cohesion, increases the fear of crime and adversely impacts on the regeneration, growth and job creation in the borough. This is likely to impact disproportionately on BME communities as they are more likely to live in the most deprived areas and to suffer the highest levels of social exclusion, poverty and un-employment.

We expect that the MOPAC plans, the proposals on police station closures and local policing models are subject to a rigorous equalities impact assessment and we request that this assessment is made public.

