



Federation of Small Businesses

The UK's Leading Business Organisation

FSB London submission to Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime Consultation (MOPAC)

February 2013

1/ The Mayor's objectives and goals are outlined in part two of the draft Police and Crime Plan. What, if any, other objectives and goals would you add? (150 words maximum)

Record business crime: There is no specific reference to crime against businesses in the Mayor's objectives and goals. However, more than two thirds of small businesses in London are affected by crime, according to FSB research, at a cost of up to £3,000 per business each yearⁱ. With 4.5 million small firms in the UK, employing nearly 14 million people, engagement and support from the police is critical to help boost growth in the economy. Objectives and goals should include:

- Include a reference to business crime in the Police and Crime Plan and a wider business crime reduction strategy, setting out how you will engage with the business community and reduce business crime
- Record business crime by supporting the initiative being pursued by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead on business crime for a national definition of business crime: "any crime where a complainant perceives they have been a victim of a crime on or against a business." If business crime data is collected in a standardised manner then it would also allow a national picture of business crime to emerge rather than just a local view. The Metropolitan Police should lead on this issue to help make it happen.
- Promote and encourage signposting towards Action Fraud for advice on fraud prevention and their fraud reporting mechanism

2/ The Mayor's plans for police performance and resources are outlined in part four of the draft Police and Crime Plan. What, if any, other things could be done to address police performance and resource issues? (150 words maximum)

Report business crime: Over a third of FSB London members surveyed in London felt that reporting a crime would not be taken seriously by the policeⁱⁱ. FSB London is keen that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime provide a public report on the level of business crime in London and a breakdown for each borough. Reporting should also include fraud reported via Action Fraud. The combination of accurate recording and providing public reports, as with domestic crime, should lead to inclusion of business crime in policing plans at both local and force level and appropriate strategies for its reduction adopted as a result. Currently, this is not widespread practice.

A common definition for business crime will also ensure that police can collate information or offences relating to business crime. FSB London wants all forces to adopt this definition, so that comparisons can be made between forces, delivered through a simple electronic tag on police databases to collect the data.

Online crime and fraud is also a barrier to growth. It is crucial that the police actively encourage businesses to report online crime and fraud to the Action Fraud national reporting centre as most fraud is not local. The information is shared with the National Fraud Investigation Bureau (NFIB) which collates intelligence and initiates targeted investigations or preventative action.



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

Currently 40 per cent of businessesⁱⁱⁱ do not report crime because of a lack of faith in the system of police response. The recent Home Office Commercial Victimization Survey published in January 2013 shows the volume of business crime that is going unreported meaning that actual levels of crime will be higher^{iv}.

Engage and set business priorities: Improved engagement at local level with individual businesses and strategically with regional and national business associations is essential for improved police performance. Police can engage in the following ways:

- Hold annual or quarterly forums, to give the small business community an opportunity to discuss progress
- Hold local business community meetings at varying times of day to factor in different working days
- Collate data on businesses e.g. business emails, to send message updates or texts to businesses
- Use social media to push out real-time information for example on current threats

4/ The Mayor is committed to having an effective, efficient police force in London. In order to do this, the Mayor has prioritised keeping police officer numbers high rather than keeping underused buildings open. Do you think that the focus should be on maintaining either: Police numbers or police buildings? Police buildings How else could budget savings be made? (150 words maximum)

Electronic reporting of crime would save both time and money for small businesses and the police.

Business crime is linked to many other crimes. For example, crime against small businesses is often used as a way for criminals to 'cut their teeth' before moving on to more serious crimes. Businesses can also be focal points of anti social behaviour. Tackling business crime therefore, has the potential to lead to 'efficiency' savings since business crime is linked to other crimes.

5/ The Mayor's plans for effective crime prevention are outlined in part four of the draft Police and Crime Plan. What, if any, other things could be done to prevent crime? (150 words maximum)

Improved Planning and Partnership working: The FSB considers the Mayor's plans to be an important means to set out:

- Current levels of business crime across local authorities in London
- Engagement strategies with the local business community
- Strategies that will be employed to reduce crimes against business

To start this planning process, police need to map the make-up and needs of the local business community (i.e. premises, location, type of business) and also develop partnership initiatives with business such as Shop Watch, Business Watch, Farm Watch, Pub Watch. This will boost small business confidence in policing, enable small businesses to join relevant partnerships and facilitate reporting and intelligence exchange.

There has been a tendency in the past to focus on high value and city centre crime in relation to business. The police can use local structures to involve the business community and find out their views. Community Safety Partnerships can be used to discuss local business crime issues as community safety should cover the total community within their area.



6/ The Mayor's plans for justice and resettlement are outlined in part four of the draft Police and Crime Plan. What, if any, other things could be done to address justice and resettlement issues? (150 words maximum)

As part of the approach to reduce business crime part of the Mayor's strategy should be to discuss these issues with criminal justice representatives, e.g. magistrates in their area to ensure there is a common understanding of business crime and its economic impact on the whole community, including business owners, their families, employees and customers.

Online crime and fraud is also a barrier to growth and increasing problem for micro firms. It is crucial that the police actively encourage businesses to report online crime and fraud to the Action Fraud national reporting centre as most fraud is not local. The information is shared with the National Fraud Investigation Bureau (NFIB) which collates intelligence and initiates targeted investigations or preventative action

Small businesses are not just a part of the local community, they are the local community. They generate wealth, employment and opportunity.

7/ What, if any, other key crime and safety issues that are important to you would you include in the Police and Crime Plan? (150 words maximum)

FSB London recognises that there are financial pressures facing police services and that these constraints may impact areas such as Neighbourhood Policing Teams. This means that more than ever, regular contact and liaison with the business community is nurtured and maintained to help mitigate some of these pressures and to ensure that an increase in crime against businesses does not result from fiscal constraints.

8/ Are there any other issues affecting you that have not been covered in the draft Police and Crime Plan? If yes, what are these? (150 words maximum)

Worryingly, many businesses in London have suffered from threatening, intimidating or aggressive behaviour^v. The recent London Riots demonstrated that crime against business has wide repercussions. It affects business staff, employment and the local community. At present, official recorded crime statistics are not giving a true picture of the level of crime in London. Recorded crime statistics underestimate the true extent of crime. The British Crime Survey gives information from domestic victims but does not include commercial victims.

Small businesses play a key role in local communities. 83 pence of every pound spent with a local business goes back into the local economy^{vi}. However, small businesses have felt detached from policing and law enforcement structures. They have not felt that business crime is taken seriously by the police and this must be addressed.

ⁱ FSB-ICM 'Voice of Small Business' Panel Survey (June 2010)

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^{iv} <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/crime-business-prem-2012/>

^v FSB-ICM 'Voice of Small Business' Panel Survey (June 2010)

^{vi} <http://www.fsb.org.uk/keeptradelocal/images/fsbprocurementlores.pdf>