

# Response to – Mayor's draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-25

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## Introduction

Preventing and addressing the causes of the crime that devastates our local communities should be one of London's top priorities. The Mayor says tackling crime and making London safer is his number one priority, but there's a glaring omission in his plan.

Nowhere in the 13,000 words that make up his draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 does the Mayor have a goal for reducing murders to zero.<sup>1</sup>

In my report 'Zero murders: a vision to end homicide in London', I found that 2,140 lives were lost to homicide from 2005-2020.<sup>2</sup> That's 2,140 lives violently cut short, 2,140 families living without a loved one, and 2,140 more homicides than there should have been.

It should be neither inevitable, nor acceptable, that so many people are murdered in London, and I believe that each one of those deaths could have been prevented.

I was shocked that when I raised the need for a zero murders target with the Commissioner, that she was lost for words and did not agree that zero is the only acceptable target number for homicides in London.<sup>3</sup>

It's clear we need to be working in this direction and not accepting youth murders, or any murders, as an inevitable part of living, working or studying in London, especially when each homicide causes ripples of damage in communities, schools and for the whole city.

The Mayor and Transport for London (TfL) already have a goal of zero deaths on the road as part of Vision Zero, and there is no reason why we should limit our ambition to end preventable death to road deaths.<sup>4</sup>

The Mayor's draft Police and Crime Plan covers nearly all areas of the capital's policing. My response highlights four particular gaps, that I believe he should address in the final version.

**My four recommendations for the Mayor's Police and Crime plan are:**

- 1. Include a goal of zero murders within 10 years**
- 2. Protect the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) budget and extend a public health approach supported by violence reduction strategies throughout policing**
- 3. Launch the London Drugs Commission as soon as possible**
- 4. Reflect the importance of policing traffic crime to reduce danger on London's roads**

## 1. Set a goal for zero murders

Without a goal of zero murders, the Mayor doesn't have a strategic goal that we, as Londoners, can hold him to account over, pushing him and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to do everything possible to reduce homicide in our city.

Setting a bold target will inspire bold action. Knowing that the Mayor and the MPS have a goal to reduce murders to zero will encourage them to look at all aspects of their work through this lens.

Every action, every policy, and every decision the police make would have to be based on whether it would contribute to the overall vision of zero murders.

There is simply no other acceptable target.

The Plan says that the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) will be monitoring the number of homicides in London as part of the overarching aim to reduce violence with injury.<sup>5</sup> But simply monitoring homicides, without a concrete goal and action to reduce them is not enough.

**The Mayor should include a goal of zero murders within 10 years in the Police and Crime Plan.**

## 2. Reduce and prevent violence

I welcome that the Plan prioritises 'reducing and preventing violence in all its forms' and recognises the importance of strong partnerships with youth workers and practitioners. This is particularly important given the context of devastating cuts to youth services over more than ten years as exposed by my Assembly colleague Sian Berry.<sup>6</sup>

In 2019 the Mayor set up England's first Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), a pioneering project which does some great work. A recent example is the announcement that young people working with the VRU have commissioned research into the impact on young people of knife images posted by police on their social media accounts, an issue which Greens on the London Assembly have been raising since 2017.<sup>7 8</sup>

The VRU has also supported the DIVERT programme based in custody suites to steer 18-25 year olds into employment and education, helped to fund youth work in London, and also launched the MyEnds programme, which provides communities with the support to deliver locally designed interventions in areas affected by high levels of violence.<sup>9 10 11</sup>

The VRU receives some money from central Government but given its importance to the public health approach to reducing violence, it is critical that the Mayor's support for the VRU in his Police and Crime Plan is also supported by spending in his budget.

So far in the Mayor's GLA Group Budget Proposals and Precepts 2022-23 Consultation Document the budget for the Violence Reduction Unit is being cut going in to 2022-23, falling to £24.4 million.<sup>12</sup> While this is not the final budget for the year, it is set to reduce

even further in future years. The draft Police and Crime plan is not a budget document, but it is essential we see support for violence reduction work as a priority in the budget.

I would like to see the VRU influencing a public health approach to the MPS' policing of drug offences. The recent announcement of cannabis diversion trials being established in three London boroughs shows what might be possible, but there are still examples of policing practice that risk criminalising young people for personal use of cannabis such as the continued stop and search based on the smell of cannabis and the recent 'stop and swab' operation in Shoreditch.<sup>13</sup>

The MPS needs to consider violence reduction strategies as an integral part of the way our city is policed, and not see them as separate policies.

**The Mayor should protect the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) budget and extend a public health approach supported by violence reduction strategies throughout policing.**

### **3. Launch the London Drugs Commission**

The Mayor announced in his manifesto a London Drugs Commission looking at the effectiveness of drugs laws with a particular focus on cannabis.<sup>14</sup>

This Police and Crime Plan tells us again that the Mayor will establish a London Drugs Commission to pull together the latest evidence on the effectiveness of drugs laws to come forward with policy recommendations.<sup>15</sup>

This is lifted word for word from his manifesto, providing us with no new information about who will participate and what the terms of reference will be, despite initially announcing the Commission last spring.<sup>16</sup>

The Mayor needs to include more detail in the final Police and Crime Plan about how his London Drugs Commission will work and what he hopes it will achieve.

If the Mayor is serious about taking a public health approach to the policing of drugs in our city to reduce harm for Londoners, he must get on and establish the London Drugs Commission quickly.

**The Mayor should launch the London Drugs Commission as soon as possible.**

### **4. Embed roads policing in the Plan**

While responsibility for Vision Zero sits with the Deputy Mayor for Transport, the MPS, through the Roads and Transport Policing Command, has a big role to play in reducing road danger. This needs to be reflected in the Police and Crime Plan.

Policing traffic crimes like speeding, drink and drug driving, close passing people on bikes and driving distracted, makes a huge contribution to ensuring people get home safely after walking to the shops or cycling to work.

The Plan mentions TfL, MOPAC, the MPS and the Victims' Commissioner for London working together to enhance specialist support for bereaved and seriously injured victims of road traffic collisions in London.<sup>17</sup> I welcome this close working but would like to see specialist support expanded to all victims of collisions in London.

I would also like to see the MOPAC Public Attitude Survey of Londoners include questions about how safe Londoners feel on our roads.

At the time of writing, current published data for road policing enforcement, as currently provided in a bulletin published by TfL, goes up to 2018/19.<sup>18</sup> If this data was more regularly updated, and ideally provided in a dashboard like other policing data, Londoners would be able to understand the impacts and need for enforcement on London's roads.

The road danger reduction campaign, Action Vision Zero do great work in this area and are planning on publishing their own response to the draft Police and Crime Plan which will go in to far more detail on how the Plan can help to not only reduce road danger and but also better support victims of traffic collisions.

**The Mayor must reflect the importance of policing traffic crime to reduce danger on London's roads in the Police and Crime Plan.**

## **Responding to the draft Police and Crime Plan yourself**

It's important that you respond to the Plan so your voice is heard by the Mayor and the MPS.<sup>19</sup> The public consultation is open and will run until 21 January 2022. The draft Plan is available [here](#) along with an easy read [version](#).<sup>20</sup>

There is a Talk London [survey](#) about the Plan and I encourage you to respond to it.<sup>21</sup>

The majority of questions are multiple choice and ask for your views about crime in London, for example to what extent do you think different kinds of crimes are a problem, how safe you feel, how important you think various tasks are for the MPS, among other things.

Question 33 is the only chance in the survey to give a written answer. This section is your opportunity to tell the Mayor what you think about his policing plan. I'll be asking him to include my recommendations and you can too.

If you don't want to complete the survey in full, you can also share your views via email to [consultation@mopac.london.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@mopac.london.gov.uk) or by writing to: MOPAC, 169 Union Street, London, SE1 0LL.

I hope you respond to the consultation in whatever way works best for you, because it's important that the Mayor and MPS hear your views.

## References

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- <sup>2</sup> Zero Murders: A vision to end homicide in London <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/assembly-members/publications-caroline-russell/publication-caroline-russell-vision-end-homicide-london>
- <sup>3</sup> Met Commissioner will not commit to a zero murders target <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Mig3j4zgVc>
- <sup>4</sup> Vision Zero action plan, July 2018 <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/vision-zero-action-plan.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 - Section 5 <https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/police-and-crime-plan-2021-25#5-reducing-and-preventing-violence>
- <sup>6</sup> Ten years on from London riots, youth services continue to suffer <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/sin-berry/youth-services-continue-to-suffer-ten-years-on-0>
- <sup>7</sup> New research to examine impact of images of knives on social media <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/research-on-images-of-knives-on-social-media>
- <sup>8</sup> Response to new research to examine impact of knife images <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/caroline-russell/response-to-research-on-knife-images-from-met>
- <sup>9</sup> Mayor recommits to tackling crime and its root causes in term 2 <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-recommits-to-tackling-crime>
- <sup>10</sup> Mayor announces new package of funding to boost youth work in London <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/londons-vru-steps-in-to-support-youth-work-sector>
- <sup>11</sup> 'My Ends' programme funds communities fighting back against violence <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/violence-reduction-unit-vru/my-ends-programme-funds-communities-fighting-back-against-violence>
- <sup>12</sup> GLA Group Budget Proposals and Precepts 2022-23 Consultation Document December 2021 [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors\\_consultation\\_budget.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayors_consultation_budget.pdf)
- <sup>13</sup> Statement re reports of cannabis decriminalisation in media <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/aim-to-divert-young-people-away-from-drug-use>
- <sup>14</sup> Sadiq Khan 2021 Manifesto <https://sadiq.london/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Sadiq-for-London-Manifesto-.pdf>
- <sup>15</sup> Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 - Section 5.2 <https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/police-and-crime-plan-2021-25#5-reducing-and-preventing-violence>
- <sup>16</sup> Mayor of London to examine benefits of decriminalising cannabis <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/apr/05/mayor-of-london-sadiq-khan-cannabis-legalisation-drugs-commission>
- <sup>17</sup> Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 - Section 7.1 <https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/police-and-crime-plan-2021-25#5-reducing-and-preventing-violence>
- <sup>18</sup> Safety and security <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/safety-and-security>
- <sup>19</sup> London Assembly Police and Crime Committee - Wednesday, 1 December 2021 <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/londonassembly/meetings/documents/b23725/Minutes%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20Draft%20Police%20and%20Crime%20Plan%202021-25%20Wednesday%2001-Dec-2021%2010.00%20Police%20and%20.pdf?T=9>
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