

Mayor's Office

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Our ref: MPJ
Your ref:
Date:

Dear Len

I understand the MPA is in the final stages of developing the Policing Plan for 2005/06, which is due to be finalised by the end of March 2005. My officers have been working closely with colleagues in the MPA and MPS and have provided input for the development of the Policing Plan on specific issues, recommendations arising from the budget and equalities process and key deliverables set out in my budget. Whilst there is now general consensus about where MPS resources need to be focused over the coming year, there are three specific issues which, if not dealt with appropriately, could have an adverse impact on the effectiveness of the Plan:

1. Drugs

There is currently no explicit reference in the corporate control strategies to tackling drugs. This omission could be perceived as representing a reduction in the MPS commitment to tackling drug misuse in London and result in other partners and key stakeholders withdrawing their support. This would be particularly disappointing given that the MPS is a partner of and major player in implementing the Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance (GLADA) London Crack Cocaine Strategy.

I am aware that the chair of GLADA, John Grieve has already written to Sir Ian Blair on this matter and I seek your reassurance that control strategy 3 (to disrupt organised criminal networks, the activities they are involved in and to seize their assets in order to reduce harm in neighbourhoods and communities), will include an addendum along the lines of 'Tackling class A drugs will remain a priority within this objective'.

I am mindful that PPAF and PSA measures and targets must be included and do not want to add to these unnecessarily. However I believe the current indicator (11 - the number of crack house closure orders obtained), simply does not accurately measure MPS activity. Only an indicator showing the number of sustained closures of crack houses will offer a true picture of progress and I hope you will support the inclusion of this indicator in the Plan.

2. Violence against women

I understand that a minimum standard for every borough will be introduced to address the variance in sanctioned detections from borough to borough. I welcome this measure and as a result expect to see a sharp increase in the percentage of arrests where power of arrest exists as well as in sanctioned detections.

I am concerned that the detection rate for rape offences has fallen three months in a row and now stands at 30% for the MPS as a whole. Given that reporting of rape has gone up since the introduction of the three Havens, now covering the whole of London and increased public confidence in the way the MPS deals with rape and sexual assault, I seek reassurance that this is being addressed as a matter of urgency. As with Domestic Violence the MPS have acknowledged that there is variance in performance across the boroughs and I therefore hope you will support the introduction of a minimum standard for each borough to address this.

3. Operational Policing Measure

Despite on going discussions between officers of the GLA, MPS and MPA there has been little progress on the full delivery of the OPM. My commitment to increasing police numbers over the last four years has been based on the delivery of visible, accessible policing to the public. Whilst Control strategy 4 (To improve neighbourhood safety) includes a measure for “percentage of police officer time spent on frontline duties”, the OPM is the only transparent way for this to be demonstrated and I am very concerned that it is still not being fully implemented.

I hope you will support these issues being properly reflected in the Plan and look forward to your response to the points raised in this letter. If you require any further information please contact Siwan Hayward on 020 7983 4704.

I am happy for this letter to be shared with all Members in readiness for their discussions on the Plan at the Authority’s 24 February meeting.

Yours sincerely

Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London